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Helen Bury; or, The errors of my early life

Emma Jane Worboise

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BY

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HELEN BURY;

OR,

THE ERRORS OF MY EARLY LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

"I love the present, but the past
Hath such a spell around it cast,
That oft, from all I hear or see,
I turn, dead Time! to gaze on thee;
And o'er the grave of buried hours
Bid Memory strew her pallid flowers."

ROBERT MONTGOMERY.

MANY years have passed away since the events occurred which I am about to record. Once, I mingled with the gay and busy world, and manifold temporal duties lay around my path; now, I abide alone in the world of nature. My cottage-home stands beneath the peaceful shelter of stern high hills. In the distance rolls the far-off sea, blue and peaceful as the skies above;

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nearer, are the mountain-torrents, foaming down through wood and vale, over rocks and under spreading trees, till they reach the broad clear stream of the river; there stands the gray old sanctuary, with its moss-grown walls; and beneath its solemn shade is the quiet vine-clad vicarage, from whence two pious pastors have passed away since I first came to reside at Rockenthwaite.

It may be asked why I commit these reminiscences of the past to paper. I have several reasons for doing so. Firstly and principally, because a life's experience of one whom the Almighty has taught and led in His own blessed and wonderful way, may, if recorded, serve as warning and encouragement to those who are even now setting forth on their path of mortal life, viewing its long and yet untrodden perspective, but doubtful and uncertain as to its issues. Then, again, I dwell alone; my occupations are few; although scarcely yet old, I am ill, and cannot leave my habitation, save in summer weather, and I find it profitable to myself to recall the various scenes of trial and deliverance through which it has

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been my lot to pass; and, lastly, there are still some few persons left who will gladly receive and value these slight memorials of one who, however unworthy, is still much beloved.

My earliest recollections are of Oxford, and its hallowed precincts. I remember, when a very little child, standing in awe, to survey the gray, venerable towers of Christ Church; and, as I grew older, and thought and feeling became more developed, this emotion of reverence in nowise decreased, but rather, on the contrary, became deeper and stronger.

But I am forgetting my name and parentage. In the days of which I am now writing, I was called Helen Bury. My father, who died suddenly some months before my birth, was a clergyman of the Established Church. My mother had married contrary to the inclinations of her relatives, and when she found herself a homeless, portionless widow, she knew that it would be useless to solicit from them the protection which she so greatly needed. My late father, however, had a sister, herself a

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widow, residing at Oxford, and when the first shock of bereavement had passed away, and the first burst of agony had subsided, my poor mother wrote to this lady, simply stating her circumstances, and throwing herself upon her kindness. Mrs. Selwyn did not answer this letter, but, invalid as she was, came to my mother immediately, remained with her till every matter was arranged, and only returned when her mourning sister-in-law was ready to accompany her.

In Oxford, and under my Aunt Selwyn's roof, I first beheld the light of day. As to my surviving parent, she never entirely recovered the shock of her husband's death. She lived for a few years a patient sufferer, and then departed this mortal life in the full assurance of a blessed inheritance, purchased by the merits of that only Saviour, into whose hands she was enabled to commit herself and her fatherless child. I have still a vivid recollection of her gentle face, and her exquisite beauty. I well remember her dark blue eyes, and her marble-like brow, as she bent over me at my hour of evening

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prayer, or when laid in my little bed I waited for the last kiss and the final good night. Her decline was gradual; but, at the last, death came suddenly. I have a perfect recollection of leaving her, early one bright summer evening, little deeming that I had kissed her hollow rose-flushed cheek for the last time; and of returning at sunset, and finding the household in tears, and my mother arrayed in all the calm cold stillness of death.

Of course my grief and agony were extreme, but childish sorrow quickly evaporates; though mine certainly endured longer than any one about me supposed. I frequently paid visits, tearful visits, to my mother's room, when every one imagined me to be amusing myself in my own especial apartment; and, to this day, I love and cherish white roses, because they were her favourite flowers, and because, on that last sad evening, I had plucked a whole handful for her, little thinking that on the following morning those roses would be strewed upon the snowy covering laid over her lifeless remains.

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I was not quite five years old, when I thus became entirely an orphan, and thenceforth my kind aunt looked upon me as her own child. Two more years elapsed, during which I wandered unrestrainedly over the house and garden, sometimes learning a lesson in geography, committing to memory a short piece of poetry, or reading a page or two of history; but my progress in study was slow, and at length it almost ceased to *be* progress; the most that could be said for it was, that it was not retrogression.

At the age of seven, my aunt engaged a governess to give me daily instruction, but the plan did not succeed. Miss Morris said that I was a very idle child, and not remarkably gifted with ability. She was dismissed, and another, and another lady undertook the charge of Miss Helen Bury, with such indifferent success, that at length my aunt could not but see that the fault lay not in the incapacity or negligence of the instructors, but in the idleness and inattention of her own darling niece. It was a severe struggle, as she herself afterwards confessed to me, but real disinterested affection and duty

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prevailed, and I was sent to a distant school.

Never shall I forget my feelings of shame, when I found myself placed in the lowest class, with three other girls not ten years of age, while I was a tall womanly specimen of fourteen.

I must say a few words about Brindsley Court and its inhabitants, though it is not my intention to dwell on that uneventful portion of my life. Yet, why do I say uneventful? for there I met Emily Leicester, the friend who afterwards as a sister clung to me through long days of care and poverty; who watched with me by the dying couch of all that I held dearest on earth; who gazed with me on the idolised departed dead; and who cheered and upheld me in the hour of earth's bitterest anguish, by the blessed certainty of a heavenly Father's love, and the glorious hope of final admission into a world where sorrow can never enter.

But to return to my school-days. Brindsley Court stood about half a mile from the sea, on the coast of North Devonshire. It was a dilapidated mansion, and had once

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belonged to a noble Norman family; but during the civil wars in the time of the Commonwealth, fell into the hands of a Scottish gentleman, who lived there soberly and gravely enough, his puritanical habits forming a strange contrast with the wild and riotous scenes which had been enacted during the residence of former proprietors.

At length, Brindsley Court was sold; and after passing through many hands, it was taken by Mrs. Talbot and her two sisters, the Misses Effingham, for the purpose of establishing within its walls a school for young ladies. Of these Christian gentlewomen it may be sufficient to say that, while they conscientiously exerted themselves to instruct their pupils in useful knowledge and elegant acquirements, they laboured diligently to train them up as heirs of eternal life.

Before I had been a fortnight in the house, Emily Leicester became my especial friend. She was two years younger than myself; a pale, pensive-looking girl, with calm dark eyes, and nearly black hair; gifted with extraordinary talents, and possessed of acquirements which would have done honour

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to a person many years older. Nevertheless, the giddy, deficient, idle Helen Bury became the chosen friend and companion of the industrious and intellectual Emily Leicester. However, I will pass over my school-days, and proceed at once to the last evening which I spent at Brindsley.

I was nineteen years of age, and the morrow was to restore me to my aunt, and also to the outer world, from which the dwellers in our secluded mansion on that quiet Devonshire coast were almost excluded. I had learned but little during my five years of school-life. I could draw a little, and speak volubly enough a little barbarous French; in music only was I an adept. My voice was naturally pure and sweet, as well as powerful; I had spared no pains in its cultivation; and, consequently, in singing I excelled; and my fond aunt, and my old Oxford friends, in their delight, almost deemed me a second Billington.

The summer vacation being about to commence, the book-shelves in the schoolroom were empty; harps and pianofortes silent; and numerous trunks, ready corded and

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directed, were standing in the hall. The house was deserted, for it was a glorious evening in June; and each member of our little society was in the garden. I felt very sad, for I really loved many of my young companions; and now we were about to part, perhaps for ever.

I stood at the hall-door waiting for Emily Leicester. Like myself, Emily was an orphan, but she had no kind friends in England, and she generally spent the vacation at Brindsley Court, excepting, indeed, when she accompanied me to Oxford. We left the garden, and wandered into a small wood which occupied a part of what had once formed Brindsley Park. Emily, too, was sad. She had to remain at school for some time longer; and then her relations in Calcutta would, she feared, require her return to India. For some time we sat watching the sun, as it lighted up the dark waters of the sea before it sank beneath the waves. We did not speak; and yet we both felt that we had much to say ere the parting hour should arrive. At last, I broke the mournful silence. I saw that the eyes of my dear companion

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were full of tears; and I wiped them away, saying, as cheerfully as I could—

"Emily, dear Emily, we shall often meet again; when you leave school, we may even live together; and even if your friends should recall you to Calcutta, you can return to Europe as soon as you are of age."

"It is foolish and wrong in me to be so sad," replied Emily; "but I know that I am a very singular person; my aunt in India always called me a strange child; and, during my long sojourn here, though my teachers and associates have all been very kind, yet no one except yourself loves me dearly. I do not doubt but that the fault lies entirely with myself; still, I do feel very desolate when I look forward to at least three more years at school, without any friend whom I tenderly love, or who will love *me*."

I replied in the true style of schoolgirl friendship; said I should never marry, and talked of a delicious Welsh cottage, where, in the enjoyment of our mutual affection, and of every elegance of life, we might spend our lives in imitation of the celebrated

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ladies of Llangollen. Emily smiled faintly, and said—

"You think so now; but time will change your ideas of happiness. And now, Helen, love, I want to talk with you about other and more important things. I should be grieved, indeed, if you were to forget *me*, but still more deeply grieved were you to forget the blessed lessons of truth and piety which both of us have received here."

"No, no, dearest Emily," I replied, "I never *can* forget them; I will not mingle in the gay world; do not fear for me, I will not disgrace my Christian profession. I know that strong temptations will beset me, but, in the strength of the Lord, I shall be able to overcome them."

"May God indeed give strength to both of us!" answered Emily, very seriously.

I cannot here recount all that my beloved friend said on the solemn subject which she had introduced, but she spoke very earnestly; I listened, and believed that in the main I acquiesced in her views; yet I thought her somewhat enthusiastic, and could not help comparing my own cold

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feelings with regard to religion, with her fervent and glowing sentiments. Many of the pupils at Brindsley Court were decidedly Christian characters, but in none did the influence of Divine grace shine forth so fully and so brightly as in my beloved Emily Leicester. Her friends had sent her at an early age to England, to be educated; and it was during her long voyage from India, that, unregarded and neglected, she had first learned to love her Bible. The book had belonged to the mother whom she had never known, but to whose memory her young heart clung with an instinctive tenderness. It was by no mortal teaching that this child, young as she was, understood what she read. Hour after hour she spent in gazing on the broad, blue waters of the ocean; musing the while on the love of the Saviour in coming to die for helpless and sinful men. None had ever spoken to her of the truths of the Gospel; she had seen much of crime during her short life, and consequently much of sorrow; but, in her beloved Bible, she read that sin should not always triumph; and she knew that a rest

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was prepared for the children of God. Her first prayer was, that she might be numbered in that blessed family; and surely her childish lispings were answered. Year after year passed away; and though subject (as are all the sons and daughters of Adam) to sin and temptation, yet did she, for the most part, walk on her way rejoicing in Him to whom she had committed her soul, and displaying a lovely consistency of character. The last months of her mortal life were, beyond description, calm and happy. But this is anticipating; I speak at present of her early life, and of my own.

As the evening shadows gathered round us, our conversation became more earnest. Emily spoke of the peace of those who love the law of their God; she talked, too, of the Christian's trials and conflicts on his road to Zion, and then of the termination of his journey, when, his *home* reached, he shall rest for ever in the eternal joy of his Lord.

For many years those sweet words dwelt in my memory, though they seemed to me but as a very lovely song.

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The supper-bell broke up our *tête-à-tête.* Slowly and sadly we returned to the house, and that night I lay long awake, pondering my future plans.

That I was a converted character, I never for one moment doubted; for had I not determined to dress plainly, to teach poor children, and to work for them, and above all, to abstain from all worldly amusements, and scenes of fashionable gaiety? I knew that my aunt held opinions on religion different from my own and Emily's, and I quite expected to meet with opposition; for, now that my school-days were ended, she evidently wished me to mix very much with society; but this idea rather gave me pleasure than otherwise, for I felt some degree of pride in the idea that, despite of entreaty, and, perhaps, a little harshness, I should go boldly on in my Christian course.

Alas! I trusted in myself, and never dreamed of religious difficulties, save those which I have mentioned. I never thought of other and far more subtle dangers. Of the nature of Popery I had, of course, been taught something; but of spiritual peril to

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myself or others arising from that quarter, I had, as may be readily believed, no idea. Of Tractarianism I had heard nothing; indeed, its existence was as yet scarcely *known*, even at Oxford. I had written to my aunt, petitioning for leave to bring my friend Emily home with me; but to my infinite sorrow and disappointment, my request was refused. The truth was this, my Aunt Selwyn really loved and admired Emily Leicester, but she thought her rather too precise and sombre, and certainly not a little, as she termed it, methodistical; and she feared her influence at a time when she wished to introduce me to new scenes. *New* scenes unquestionably; but very different to those I had anticipated.

The moment of departure at length arrived; I bade farewell to Mrs. Talbot and to my companions, with tearful eyes; but when I pressed Emily to my heart, I felt as though that heart were breaking. She, too, wept abundantly, but she was more composed than I, and, after a promise of frequent correspondence, she withdrew herself from my arms, and I entered the carriage which

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waited for me. I continued to gaze on Emily as she stood between the Misses Effingham, on the lawn before the house, till the windings of the road hid her from my view, and then I gave way to a fresh burst of tears.

The day wore on, and the bright green earth was lovely in her summer array. By degrees my bitter sorrow subsided, and I gazed with delight on the rich country through which I passed. Evening came at length, and I rested for the night at Chippenham, where my aunt's confidential servant awaited me. I was too tired to reflect on my new position, as a young lady of finished education; and the next day I resumed my homeward journey. It was afternoon when the gray towers of Oxford once more broke upon my view: I passed rapidly through the well-known streets, and in a few minutes my aunt received me, as she ever had done, with the affection of a mother. The apartment which had always been appropriated to my use was newly furnished for my reception, and I was pleased to behold on my dressing-table a richly bound

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Bible, and a prayer-book splendidly illuminated after the fashion of the ancient missals. The dark purple velvet which decked this latter book was ornamented by a gold border, with a cross in the centre, and clasps of the same precious metal. These costly volumes were presents from my aunt, and my eyes sparkled with delight as I hastened to open them, and read my name, as I expected, inscribed on the blank-leaf of each. During the hours which followed, I found, as may readily be believed, many circumstances to communicate to my affectionate relative; and in the relation of school events, inquiries after home friends, and many allusions to Emily Leicester, the summer evening passed.

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CHAPTER II.

"Prayer is the soul's SINCERE DESIRE,
Utter'd or unexpress'd;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

"O Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod,
Lord! teach us how to pray."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

THE crimson sunset had faded into dim twilight when Mrs. Selwyn, starting on hearing the clock of an adjacent college strike the hour of ten, desired me, somewhat abruptly, to ring the bell. I rang accordingly; and James, my aunt's old and dignified footman, answered the summons. He

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brought lights; and, to my infinite surprise and delight, placed on the table a large family Bible and a Book of Common Prayer. His mistress took her seat at the head of the table, and James, having withdrawn, quickly re-appeared, accompanied by the other domestics. The servants seated themselves at the lower end of the room, and Mrs. Selwyn read the evening Psalms, as appointed in the Church Liturgy, and then some of the prayers which compose the Evening Service.

Yet this domestic service seemed a very heartless form, though the servants made the responses with a considerable degree of solemnity. It would have been difficult to trace the exact cause of the evident coldness and formality which characterised these evening devotions. It was something rather to be felt than expressed; and, for myself, wearied as I was by my journey, I gave, at the time, very little thought to the matter. That night I slept long and soundly, and only descended on the following day in time to join the family, assembled in the breakfast-room for morning prayers, which were

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similar to those of the preceding night, excepting, of course, that the morning ritual was substituted for that of the evening. My aunt appeared thoughtful, and, I fancied, a little embarrassed. Immediately after breakfast she said—

"Now, Helen, we must dress for church."

I did not reply; but, remembering her character and habits as I had last contemplated them, I stood gazing at her, and feeling almost uncertain whether I had heard her aright.

"Yes, my love," she repeated, "for church. To-day is the twenty-fourth of June; it is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and commanded by the Church to be kept holy. Make haste, for we have no time to lose."

I went to my room, lost in astonishment. I had left my Aunt Selwyn but six months before, immersed in all the gaieties of the aristocratic society of Oxford. She had promised me, moreover, to spend the next winter in town, in order to introduce me to scenes of worldly dissipation, which our own ecclesiastical city could not afford. On the occasion of my former visit, she had taken

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me, on the first morning after my arrival, to the milliner's; and, as to going to church, she certainly *then* considered one attendance on the Sabbath, with perhaps a little extra devotion in Passion Week, as quite sufficient for any Christian gentlewoman. No wonder that I felt most thoroughly perplexed. "And what," I asked myself, "has worked this mighty change? Can it be of God? Has He indeed removed the mist from before the eyes of this dear friend, and shewn her the vanity of all worldly things?" I was willing to believe that this might be the case; but yet I could not be quite satisfied that it really was so, for I could not but observe that it was only during the time actually occupied by family devotions that my aunt had ceased to talk on frivolous subjects; and that, in its general tone, her conversation was as worldly as ever. In a state, therefore, of decided perplexity, I went downstairs into the hall, where Mrs. Selwyn awaited me, and James stood respectfully in the background ready to attend us, and carry our splendid prayer-books.

The church which we attended stood a

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little way out of Oxford. I knew that the clergyman, who had read and preached within its hoary walls for thirty years, in a most dronish fashion, had recently departed this life, and that a young minister, highly intellectual, and, as it was reported, very handsome, had taken his place; and I was beginning to hope that this gentleman, Mr. St. John Villiers, might indeed be a pastor able and zealous in his Master's work. When we entered the church, I was amazed at the many alterations which had taken place in it during my late absence. Mr. Villiers had indeed wrought wonders in the exterior and visible parts of the church; for, since the preceding January, the whole surface of things seemed changed, though many transformations were still in progress. If the spiritual state of the congregation was in like degree altered (supposing the alteration to be for the better), I felt that the young rector must have made the very best use of his time. The pews had, in many cases, been moved from their former position; the pulpit had been taken from the top of the centre aisle, and placed on one side of the building;

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while a splendid faldstool occupied the place of the old reading-desk. Within the chancel, which was very deep, were placed some antique oaken benches, with curiously carved backs; and, last of all, the communion-table had disappeared, and a stone altar had been substituted in its stead, bearing upon it two massive and gorgeously gilded candlesticks, furnished with huge unlighted tapers.

Now, in my retirement at Brindsley, I had heard, as I have already observed, nothing of the innovations of Puseyism; therefore, I only gazed, and wondered, and admired; for all this was very imposing. Soon the service commenced, and it was chanted and intoned as in cathedrals and the college chapels.

There was the same fault in the public celebration of the Church service on this occasion as there had been in my aunt's prayers at home. There was a species of modish ceremony; an inexpressible frigidity, which I in vain endeavoured to believe lay in my own listlessness of spirit. The service over, we quitted the church, but not till my aunt had led me into the south aisle to

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admire some old monuments which Mr. St. John Villiers had caused to be rescued from obscurity and placed there. Then we proceeded homewards through the meadows; and I was just going to inquire about the new rector, and his marvellous transformations, when we were overtaken by one of the graduates of Christ Church, who accosted Mrs. Selwyn as a familiar and valued friend. An introduction, of course, took place; and my aunt made known to me Mr. Herbert Travers, and explained that I was her niece, Helen Bury. We walked together, conversing on many topics, till we reached home, when Mr. Travers left us, after having accepted from Mrs. Selwyn an invitation to dinner. When he was gone, and my aunt and I were once more alone, I began to inquire respecting the Rev. St. John Villiers.

"Mr. Villiers is a most excellent man," replied Mrs. Selwyn; "he is the leader of the younger portion of the powerful party at Oxford, who are doing their utmost to restore the glory and purity of the Anglican Church. These church reformers are

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miscalled a *new* sect; but that is incorrect —they have long existed, and, as there is little doubt, have long been secretly at work. But of late their number has wonderfully increased; the most influential men of the various colleges have joined, and are still joining them. Besides this, the purity of their lives has conveyed such an example, that far and wide the work of renovation is spreading; and, ere long, we may hope that the Church *will* be restored."

"Restored?" I answered; "how restored? Does the Church need restoration? There are careless and lukewarm ministers in her communion, I know, but surely that does not render either the Church or her services faulty?"

"I can scarcely explain the subject," replied Mrs. Selwyn, "but Mr. Travers will be here this evening, and he will give you the information you desire. He and some of his friends are often here; they are such devoted, heavenly-minded men, that I am sure you, Helen, who think so much about religion, will feel the inexpressible benefit of their society."

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The conversation was now changed; and it was not till I was dressing for dinner that I again thought of the restoration of the Church. Certainly, the idea was one that pleased me exceedingly; I had ever loved novelty, and here was something *quite* new, —new at least *to me*, although my aunt protested against anything like freshness being stamped on this band of renovators. My curiosity, therefore, was excited; and, moreover, I had felt much interested about Mr. Travers. Little did I think, as I prepared to descend to the drawing-room, that I was about to meet one who was destined by Providence to influence and control the whole course of my future life. I hastened down, and found the expected visitor with my aunt. Dinner was soon announced, and if I had been pleased with Mr. Travers before, I was now delighted. "Oh, that Emily were here," I said to myself, "how she would enjoy such a companion!"

Mr. Travers was about twenty-three years of age, in personal appearance singularly noble, and in manner perfectly well-bred; in fact, he was connected by blood with

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some of the proudest families of the English nobility. He was heir to a large fortune; possessed a mind of the highest order, and a power of pleasing, which, when he chose to exert himself, fell little short of fascination. Oh, Herbert! Herbert! why did such deadly error obscure the glorious intellect with which God Himself had gifted thee? Well, there was mercy at last,—those things have since passed away, and, save to myself, they are as though they had never been! When I speak of Herbert and Emily, all but the sad remembrance that they are no more fades from my memory. Let me now revert to Herbert, as Mr. Travers.

He had travelled much on the continent, and had much to say which deeply interested and amused us; not in the usual pompous and high-flown style of young travellers, but in his own gentle, yet eloquent manner of description. His remarks, too, upon certain places and people, struck me as quite original, and more sensible in matter and in adaptation than anything of the kind which I had ever heard before. When my aunt and I left the dinner table, her first

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words were—"Now, Helen, is not Mr. Travers all that I described him to be?"

"All!" I repeated in a tone of enthusiasm; "far more, aunt; and you say he often comes here, but I fear he will think me a very ignorant creature;" and, for the first time in my life, I began privately to deplore my negligence in study, and to devise some means whereby I might, in any degree, improve myself. Mr. Travers very soon joined us, and we again conversed about the Coliseum, the Appii Forum, Tivoli, and much more of equal interest; or rather, I should say, that Mrs. Selwyn and her guest conversed, while I listened, and hazarded a remark now and then, only when I felt quite sure that I stood on secure ground.

At length, on the occurrence of a pause in the conversation, my aunt took the opportunity of inducing her accomplished visitor to explain, for my benefit, the end and purpose which his party had in view, in restoring the ancient ceremonies of the Church. A fine glow passed over Mr. Travers's expressive countenance, while he replied—

"The matter may be explained in some

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degree by simply stating that the Church of England, from the time of her separation from the Church of Rome, has gradually suffered much of her venerable ritual and her wholesome discipline to fall into disuse. Her clergy have been allowed to become negligent, and to give themselves up to the cares and pleasures of this world. What has become of the simple austerity of sacerdotal life? Where are the men who would lay all things aside, save the cross of Christ, and devote themselves, body, soul, and spirit, fully and undividedly, to the work of God's consecrated, hallowed ministers? Thank God! there *are* such men, and many such now, within the ancient halls of Oxford! England's Church has been roused from her long and sinful slumber; and, ere long, we may hope that the rectories and vicarages of our native land may be filled with men animated by the same high and holy spirit. Then, may we hope that our Mother Church may once more gather her lost and strayed children; and, teaching them her sacred laws, and pouring out upon them the blessed privileges, which by baptism became their

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right and inheritance, may again stand in all the glory of the olden days, the object alike of tender love and holy awe."

Never, never shall I forget those words; they were graven on my heart as with a pen of iron. As Mr. Travers spoke, there was an earnestness, a sincerity, and an animation in his fine face, that an enthusiastic person might almost have mistaken for inspiration. I had nothing to advance against what he said; nay, I thought he was very right, and that it would be pleasant and glorious to watch the Church gradually shaking off her dross, and coming forth in her splendour, purified and exalted by such men as Herbert Travers. At length I asked—

"Of course, you are preparing for holy orders, Mr. Travers?" A shade passed over his noble brow as I spoke, and he answered—

"A year ago I should positively have said *yes* to your question; but now I hardly know: I am not so devoted, so spiritual, as the holy state of the priesthood demands. I cannot make up my mind to a life of lonely celibacy. I fear that I am very wrong; but

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since I cannot bring myself to renounce for ever marriage, and all earthly ties, I feel it my bounden duty not to give to my Mother Church a divided heart, and energies half crippled, by being partly applied to worldly purposes."

"But is it wrong for clergymen to marry?" I asked, in profound astonishment. "My own father was a clergyman, and he, I have ever been told, was a most pious man of God. Nearly all clergymen are married."

"Yes," replied Mr. Travers, "but many abuses are tolerated both in civil and ecclesiastical matters; and this abuse, which has long existed, is expressly contrary to the original canons of the Church: 'He that is married careth for the things of the world.' Is such a man a proper person for a priest of the sanctuary; all of whose earthly affections *should* be forgotten in aspirations after heavenly things?"

"But that is a Roman Catholic doctrine," I said,

"The holy Catholic Church," said Mr. Travers, devoutly, "has unfortunately

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adopted many superstitious observances, and some that are, perhaps, hardly scriptural. Strip her of these errors, and she undoubtedly is the only true Church of Christ."

I could not answer, so great were my ignorance and my astonishment.

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CHAPTER III.

"The world held nought
Save the *one* being to my centred thought;
There was no music but his voice to hear,
No joy, but such as with *his* step drew near;
Light was but where he look'd, life where he moved;
Silently, fervently! thus, thus I loved.
Oh! but such love is fearful! and I knew
Its gathering doom."

FELICIA HEMANS.

MR. TRAVERS having departed, I was alone in my own chamber. It was a lovely summer night, and I stood for some time gazing on the gray towers and pinnacles of Christ Church Cathedral, as they stood in their calm repose, beneath the rich mellow moonlight which bathed all things in its splendour. Of course, Mr. Travers and his conversation were uppermost in my mind. The novelty of the doctrines which I had heard, startled me; but still the question continually occurred, Is Mr. Travers right,

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or is he misleading my aunt? Is he not likely to mislead *me?* *Now,* I wonder that I did not kneel, and pray for that Divine illumination which would have taught me to distinguish truth from error. Had I uttered one heartfelt prayer, would not my eyes have been fully opened? Should I not have observed what I had altogether overlooked—namely, that, although Mr. Travers had insisted much upon the authority of the Church, and upon the devotion due to her sacred ordinances, he had not once mentioned the obedience and love which a redeemed sinner, a member of Christ's ransomed Church below, ought to render to his blessed Lord and Master? Why was I so blind? Alas! proud and foolish as I was, and believing myself to stand firm as a rock in that "holy faith," of which, at that time, I really knew nothing, I had come home prepared to fight against persecution, but as to false doctrine, I never thought about it at all; my only defensive preparation against the wiles of the devil, who, I knew, would try to make me a mere worldling, being a firm determination to cast away, as beneath

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the dignity of a Christian professor, all the vanities and puerilities of this sinful world; and this *in my own strength!* I thought myself humble, because I often said, on my knees, that I was a miserable sinner, but, in reality, I was most outrageously proud; and deeply should I have resented the application to me by another of those very terms of humiliation which I myself constantly used. No wonder, then, that, when a snare, of the existence of which I had no suspicion, was laid for my unwary feet, I straightway fell into it.

The hours passed away, but I could not close my eyes in sleep; and the morning sun was shining brightly, ere I fell into a disturbed slumber. That day passed; as did the next, which was Sunday; but I did not see Mr. Travers. On Sunday we attended the usual services; and, however much I might admire Mr. Villiers's new arrangements, the sermons which he preached did not altogether satisfy me. In his morning discourse, he spoke much of the "Eucharist," and, in sublime language certainly, of our blessed Saviour's death and passion; but in all that

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he said, there was a coldness, a lack of applicative earnestness, which I could not but painfully contrast with the simple, scriptural, and practical addresses which for the last five years I had heard in Brindsley church. It is true that our young clergyman's predecessor had never pronounced from the pulpit anything better than dull, dry, moral essays, alike unpleasant and unprofitable; but then he was one of a race of clergymen now happily almost extinct. He took no trouble which he could possibly avoid; no one ever expected from him anything beyond the mere formal duties which he was bound to discharge. But with Mr. St. John Villiers the case was far otherwise. He was evidently wide awake, and engaged in his ministerial offices with the whole energy of his character. However, I was too ignorant to form any correct judgment on the matter.

The Sabbath passed and Monday came, and with it Mr. Travers, who brought us a volume of "Lives of the Fathers," which he recommended to my aunt's and my own perusal. That evening, he walked with us; and as we stood by the river, some time after

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sunset, watching the darkening landscape, and listening to the sweet sound of the distant bells, he exclaimed—

"Ah, how beautiful! That reminds me of the vesper-bells, which at nightfall fling their melody over the fair land of Italy. How soothingly do their echoes fall amid her lonely mountains, and die on the blue waves of her solemn waters! You must hear them, Miss Bury, to know their exquisite and hallowed music. You probably fancy me an enthusiastic poetical dreamer; yet, if you could stand on the bright shores of Italy, and gaze on her clear azure lakes, with the light fading from their glassy surface, and hear the low sweet chime of vesper-bells, pealing forth from proud ancient cities, echoing from vineclad-hills, or stealing gently on the soft dying wind, from some green valley rich with flowers, shaded by countless forest trees, and hallowed by the gray ruins of temples of the olden time, or, it may be, the towers of a secluded monastery; then, I am sure, Miss Bury, you would not stand and listen unmoved to the sacred harmony."

"Can aught," I asked, "be sacred, which

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calls men to participate in rites, which, being idolatrous, must be displeasing to God?"

Mr. Travers waived a decisive reply, and merely said, "The summons to prayer must needs be holy: if mistaken beings will worship idols, the sin and the danger are on their own heads; but there is something touchingly sweet and solemn in the idea, that one hour calls all earth's poor erring children to their Father's throne—

> "Ye who triumph, ye who sigh,
> Kindred by one holy tie;
> Pray ere yet the dark hours be,
> Lift the heart and bow the knee."

"True," I replied, applying aptly enough the head-knowledge which I possessed; "but Mrs. Hemans here refers to those who lift the heart and bow the knee to God alone. The sweet vesper-bells of which you speak summon to false and delusive rites, those who ought to place their dependence only on Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

"Helen, my love, you are really too uncharitable," said my aunt; "pray, forgive her, Mr. Travers; she has, as yet, had no opportunity of overcoming the old prejudices

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which have taught her to look upon the religion of Rome as a kind of bugbear, the very mention of which is to drive away anything like Christian forbearance."

"I am sure," replied Mr. Travers, "that Miss Bury does not speak thus of our sister Church—our elder sister, I may say—in any spirit of bitterness. Once, indeed, not many months since, I entertained similar opinions myself. How greatly (thanks to my zealous friends) my opinions and feelings have changed, I need not say."

The next evening, Mr. Travers was with us again; but it rained, and we could not walk. The pianoforte was our natural resource, and I found that our visitor had a very fine baritone voice, which harmonised well with my own. From that time, Mr. Travers was our very frequent guest. He often brought new music; principally, newly arranged masses; for, with just and highly cultivated taste, he protested, with very few exceptions, against the flimsy productions of the day. Sometimes he selected for us books; occasionally of a religious character, but more frequently poetry, history,

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or standard novels. These last he took great pains in choosing, and, of course, rejected all that were not perfectly free from the immoral taint which disgraces much of that kind of literature. More than this, however—he approved of none which were not characterised by a religious tone, and of which the sentiments were not in accordance with his own views. The hero or heroine of the tale of his choice was generally a Roman Catholic, whose possessions had been unjustly claimed by the Crown; and bigoted Protestants were frequently brought out in strong relief against their mild, gentle, and benevolent Popish victims. It is long since I read any of those works; but the title of one which came to my hand in somewhat later days, I well remember. It was called "Sibyl of Rodenhurst." I have not space here to record, even if it were worth while, the heads of the tale; suffice it to say, that it is as glaringly anti-Protestant, as any Tractarian on the way to Rome could desire.

It would be well if all those persons (parents or otherwise) who have the charge of young people, would thoroughly examine

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the fictitious narratives which they may permit their pupils to peruse. The press teems with Tractarian poison, disguised in this alluring style. Any person who doubts this, has only to subscribe for a brief period to any extensive circulating library, in order to be well convinced that there is in this statement no shade of exaggeration. The literature of fiction possesses immense power over the minds of persons of all ages and of all ranks; it may be so used as to be most serviceable or most pernicious; it is so used continually. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of all parents and guardians, who would preserve the youthful imagination from seductive *error*, to look well to the books which those who are under their charge read; and neither to place, nor suffer to be placed, in their hands, any other volumes than those which they themselves have carefully examined and approved. What is called the *light* literature of a nation, has infinitely more weight and influence than persons in general suppose.

The bright summer months passed on, so far as I was concerned, without a cloud, save

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only my separation from Emily. To her I frequently wrote; but, though I generally mentioned Mr. Travers in my letters, I always felt averse to speaking of the doctrines which he held. I knew that Emily would condemn them; and it would have been impossible to justify them to her by letter, as Mr. Travers had explained them to me in his own beautiful language, and with his deep, melodious voice, and glowing, intellectual countenance; so I deferred all notice of Puseyism till I should meet my beloved friend, as I expected to do, during the next summer.

One day, Mr. Travers brought me a little book, which I found to be the Meditations of Pascal. He presented it with a singular timidity of manner, and I, on my part, received it gladly, and appropriated to it a place among my own very especial treasures. Weeks passed on, the leaves were fading on the trees, and I was revelling in a dream of happiness such as I had never before experienced. If I read, it was only what Mr. Travers had chosen for me; if I played or sung, it was music which he admired, or in

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which he wished me to take a part with himself. I spent much time in drawing, but always from his sketches of the exquisite scenery of Italy and Germany; in short, Mr. Travers occupied my entire thoughts. My aunt saw this, and was delighted; but *I* little knew that he was really *my world!* At length, indeed, I discovered the truth, and I trembled to find my happiness entirely placed in the hands of another; and that other, one who, although I regarded him with something very like idolatry, would, as I believed, never think more of me, otherwise than as an uninformed girl, whom he felt it his duty to direct aright, as Providence had thrown her in his way.

On a glorious afternoon in September, my aunt and I were seated in the drawing-room, expecting Mr. Travers to spend the evening with us. Mrs. Selwyn, I remember, was employed in embroidering the cover of a hassock for Mr. Villiers's pulpit, and I was practising a duet which I had promised to sing that evening with our guest. Coffee was served, but Mr. Travers

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did not appear; I felt thoroughly disappointed, though not in the least alarmed, for nothing seemed more likely than that he might be detained by some imperative but unforeseen duty, which I knew he would not in any wise relinquish for his own pleasure.

Still, as the twilight closed in, I began to feel restless and discontented, and I caught myself watching the clock which stood on the chimney-piece, and chiding its tardiness at least every ten minutes. Mrs. Selwyn, too, expressed her surprise. "But then," she continued, "he feels quite at home with us: we shall see him to-morrow morning, I have no doubt." James lighted the lamps and drew the curtains, while I sat down to the pianoforte, determined to be quite perfect in my part by the following day. My aunt industriously continued her embroidery, and half an hour had thus passed, when Pritchard, Mrs. Selwyn's maid, hurriedly entered the room, and without any preamble, exclaimed—

"Oh! ma'am, young Mr. Denham, and Mr. Prideaux, and Mr. Travers, all went

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down the river this afternoon, the boat was upset, and they are drowned!"

I remember nothing more after this; a loud crash of piano-keys rang in my ears, while darkness seemed closing around me.

It was several hours before I fully recovered my recollection; when I first awoke to a perception of what was passing around me, I found myself lying on the sofa; my aunt and my own maid busily employed in administering the usual restoratives. I heard some one say, "Now, put away all these things; she will need nothing further but a little cold water; the attack is going off, thank God."

I turned my head at the sound of that voice, and Mr. Travers himself stood by me. I was about to speak eagerly, when he prevented me, saying most affectionately, "Not now, dear Helen, you must be quiet now."

The event which Pritchard had announced had really been an awful one, although not so disastrous as she had imagined. The whole party had been precipitated into the water, but to poor young Denham alone the

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consequences had been fatal. Prideaux and Mr. Travers had hazarded their own lives to save him; but he could not swim, and when plunged into the river, he immediately sank to rise no more.

The following day I was still an invalid, though well enough to see Mr. Travers. All restraint between us seemed now laid aside. I had betrayed an affection of which, till that night, I was scarcely aware myself; and that he fully returned it, it was impossible to doubt. Before I came down that morning, Mr. Travers, or, as I must now call him, Herbert, had had a long conversation with my aunt, and had received from her a full permission to ask me to become his wife. Mrs. Selwyn chanced on this particular morning to be occupied in the garden and greenhouse; so, during her absence, I was left alone with Herbert; and before she returned, had given him the desired promise. What passed between ourselves on this occasion, I need not relate. I do not forget one word that fell from those beloved lips—those lips long silent in the grave; but such recollections are too sacred

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to be breathed to any mortal being. Love, when it is genuine, is far too holy a thing to be descanted upon to the world in general; therefore, on this part of my history, I shall only say just sufficient to render my story intelligible.

When my dear aunt came in from the garden, she looked in Herbert's face to see how matters stood. His happy smile was sufficient, and, with tears in her eyes, she pressed both our hands together, saying, "God evermore bless and keep you, my beloved ones!"

Dear, excellent Aunt Selwyn! she had always said she should die contented, if she could see me happily married. She did not, indeed, live till I actually became the wife of Herbert; but she left me with perfect confidence under his protection; and her last earthly request was contained in a letter which she wrote to Lady Baynton, Herbert's only sister, entreating her kindness for me while I remained under her roof, which it was settled I should do until my marriage.

That evening I wrote to Emily, commu-

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nicating to her my happy prospects; and bespeaking her for my bridesmaid, when the union should take place.

It will be asked, what were my religious feelings at this time? Alas! my religion, which had never been genuine and well-grounded, was now entirely one of forms and ceremonies. I had long since ceased to pray over my Bible. I had learned, indeed, to join in the services of the Church with certain mystical sensations of awe and solemnity; but my worship was lip-service only; my *feelings* were often much excited, but my heart was never touched; *that* remained cold and unmoved. When I wrote to Emily (which I did continually), either I never mentioned religious subjects, or else I alluded to them casually; touching only on such topics as are common to all who are not atheists. Emily saw this, and naturally entreated to know whether my principles were in any way changed. In answer, I gave her the outlines of my new creed, omitting, however, baptismal regeneration, and some other essential points of Tractarianism. Emily's reply showed

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her deep grief; but ere she had time to enter upon a correspondence on the subject, she was hastily called from England; and I left Oxford before I knew her foreign address, so that for several years our intercourse was totally suspended.

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CHAPTER IV.

"Glory to Him! Hope to the suffering breast!
Light to the nations! He hath roll'd away
The mists, which, gathering unto death-like rest,
Between the soul and heaven's calm ether lay;
His love hath made it day
With those that sat in darkness,—Earth and Sea,
Lift up glad strains for man, by truth divine made free."

FELICIA HEMANS.

THE succeeding winter was exceedingly cold and damp, the very atmosphere seemed changed into one continual fog; a bright frosty morning was a thing to wonder at; and, of course, out-of-door exercise was, in great measure, discontinued. During the month of November, we scarcely went anywhere, except to church: nevertheless, my time passed as happily as possible. Herbert had marked out for me a course of reading, which I diligently pursued; and this, with music and embroidery, filled up

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my mornings. The evenings always brought Herbert, and then the hours sped away on rainbow-coloured wings. A storm, however, darker than the natural storms of that long, dreary winter, was brooding over us.

Christmas Day passed without a gleam of sunshine: a drizzling rain fell all the morning, and the three succeeding days were no better. The whole exterior world seemed to be a miserable combination of wet, cold, and darkness. The three days following the twenty-fifth of December are, as most persons know, feasts of the Church, dedicated to St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, and the Holy Innocents. These festivals the High Church party consider themselves bound strictly to observe; and, accordingly, my aunt and myself, notwithstanding the inclement weather, found our way each morning to church, and that at a very early hour.

The tapers burned brightly on the (so called) altar; Mr. St. John Villiers did not fail to bow to the east whenever he turned that way, and his black preaching-gown had

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been for some time entirely laid aside. To a spiritual mind, those early services might have afforded much sweet refreshment; but the few vitally pious persons who, attracted by the youthful pastor's zeal, had at first frequented his church, had long since ceased to attend, being disgusted by the ever-increasing mummery, which had now risen to its height; saving that a crucifix was still wanting. So the service went on in its coldness; cold and darkness without, and cold and darkness within; the hollow wintry wind mournfully creeping up the damp outer aisles, and sighing in the ancient deserted chapels.

There is something very romantic in a scene of this kind. I remember, as well as if I had seen them yesterday, the shadowy forms of the few shivering worshippers, and the white flowing robes of the officiating ministers. There were lights enough about the altar, but the rest of the church was left to the few faint glimmerings which came down from the chancel. Little did I think, as I admired the solemn picture-like effect, how emblematical it was of the state of the

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human beings grouped together within those gray old walls. The light of truth in their hearts was almost extinguished, and what remained was almost lost in the flaunting glare of error. The result, however, of these "early matins" was, to most of the congregation, anything but romantic: severe colds, catarrhs, and rheumatism prevailed. I, happily, escaped these evils; for I enjoyed then a rare exemption from all the maladies incidental to ladies of the higher and middle classes; but, though I did not share the almost universal influenza which ensued from these imprudent orisons, my poor aunt suffered seriously. Nevertheless, having rallied a little, she insisted upon attending public service on New-Year's Day, or, as we called it then, the "Feast of the Circumcision." When she returned home, she was really ill, and seemed scarcely able to ascend the stairs from the hall. Herbert gave her his arm, and led her to the drawing-room sofa, with all the respectful and tender attention of a son. How little did he think that she would return no more to the world which she had just quitted!

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That evening, my dear aunt became much worse, and medical advice was summoned. Her attack had been occasioned by exposure to the cold damp air; and, in a few hours, very dangerous symptoms were apparent to the experienced medical attendant. For days, Herbert and I nursed her as we would have nursed a parent. We never suspected danger, though the grave looks of the doctor rather dismayed us. At length, however, he told us that Mrs. Selwyn was dying; and so it proved. Her ever delicate constitution had sustained a terrible shock, and she was rapidly sinking beneath it. All at once, she felt her recovery to be hopeless; and, oh! the agony of that hour, when the dark future was first unfolded to her mental gaze. Herbert had departed to fetch Mr. Villiers, and I sat by my aunt's bedside, watching every change of the pale, terror-stricken countenance of her who had tended my early years with a mother's care and love. At length she spoke—"Helen, my own child, I am about to leave you; I feel that this is death. But, oh! my soul is very dark; I *may* be right—I *may* be safe,

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but all is uncertainty. The grace that I received at baptism, where is it? For years I lived without God: will one year of religion atone for a wasted, sinful life!"

I entreated her to be composed, and offered to read the Bible aloud; but she went on—

"Your mother, Helen, had no fears; *she* knew that she was dying; but there was joy to her in the knowledge. Ah! her life was different from mine. How often she reasoned with me, so gently and so convincingly, that, like Agrippa, I was almost persuaded to be such a Christian as she was! Ah, when death came, *she* could not feel, as I do, that she had been an unprofitable servant!"

Lost as I was in all the labyrinths of the deluding system which I had embraced, I felt the utter unsoundness of the views implied by this assertion, and I tried to tell the poor invalid that Jesus Christ, and not any works of her own, was the foundation on which my beloved parent rested in the solemn hour of death. Though but a little child when I lost that dear mother, some

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expressions of hers, which struck my infant mind when she was talking to me about heaven and Jesus Christ, remained fixed in my memory; I had also read some of her letters to a dear friend, who, when she was herself dying, ordered them to be transmitted to me. Truth and error, however, were now so mingled in my own mind, that I found it impossible to state to my aunt, with any clearness, the gospel tidings of salvation; and, while I endeavoured to comfort the poor patient, Herbert Travers returned, bringing with him Mr. St. John Villiers.

Herbert had communicated to the clergyman Mrs. Selwyn's unhappy state of mind; and when he came into the sick chamber, he desired to be left alone with her. Herbert and I retired to an adjoining room, in which we anxiously waited for more than an hour, when Mr. Villiers summoned us back to the couch of the invalid. We knelt while he read the Service for the Visitation of the Sick, and subsequently administered to all present the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Then, with many kind words to myself, and with an exhortation to my aunt to hold

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fast the holy faith of the Church, he left us.

I could discover but little of the nature of Mr. Villiers's private conversation with my dying relative; but I gathered that he had spoken of the duty and comfort of confession. Mrs. Selwyn replied by saying that her whole life, till within the last year, had been spent in disregard of the commandments of God: not that she had been guilty of what the world would call "flagrant sins," but she had given her whole thoughts and affections to earth. Mr. St. John Villiers bade her remember that she was a baptized member of the Church of Christ, and that, THEREFORE, Christ would be the propitiation for her sins, provided she confessed her iniquity, and declared her true penitence. He then proceeded to read the Absolution; after which he assured her that all was quite safe, for she was in the bosom of the true Church, in which no soul could be finally lost.

Strange to say, this chaotic mixture of dark and hopeless error, with only one faint glimmering streak of light, did not seem to

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me either absurd or dreadful; and yet every part of this fearfully false comfort (excepting, indeed, the one allusion to the blood of Christ) was like a strong dose of poisonous sedative! it might give ease for a while, but death, the soul's death, might be expected to follow the use of medicine so delusive. But, though Herbert and I were quite satisfied, not so the dying woman, who strove in vain to believe that God's own consecrated priest could not err. The priest, indeed, had absolved her from her sins, but that great God, from whom he professed to claim his power of forgiveness, did He smile on her parting soul?

The next morning we were sitting with her in silence, when she suddenly exclaimed, "Helen, send for Mr. Jones, the clergyman who often used to visit your dear mother."

"My dear aunt!" I exclaimed, "Mr. Jones is little better than a Dissenter! Mr. Villiers, I am sure, would think him an unsafe person for you to converse with; he might unsettle the state of your mind."

"Would to God he might!" answered my aunt, bitterly; and, as she spoke, she

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sighed almost to groaning. I looked at Herbert; he shook his head sadly, and laid his hand on his forehead, to intimate his idea that her reason was shaken, and advised me to send instantly for the old clergyman before-mentioned. I did not agree with him as to Mrs. Selwyn's state of mind; I felt sure that my aunt was perfectly free from delirium. Nevertheless, I despatched a note to Mr. Jones, beseeching him to lose no time in coming to us. He set out as soon as the messenger had made known his errand; but, living at some distance from Oxford, he did not arrive till past two o'clock in the afternoon.

Briefly, and without apology, I told him the distressing circumstances of the case, and then led him straightway to the couch of the sufferer. She spoke to him much as she had previously spoken to Mr. St. John Villiers. The aged clergyman listened for a few minutes to her doubts as to whether baptism entitled her to the privileges of a believer, and then gently answered—

"Dear madam, we will not discuss that point now. You are, and feel yourself to

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be, a miserable sinner; you feel also that you are about to die, and that the law, the pure and unalterable law of God, needs satisfaction. That satisfaction you cannot give; but," he continued, emphasizing every word, "'Jesus Christ came into the world *to save sinners.*' 'He is the propitiation for our sins: His blood cleanseth from ALL SIN.' Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Jesus saith to the broken-hearted penitent: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' Turn, then, to Him; look to Him; take hold by faith on the hem of His garment, and, like the afflicted sufferer of old, you shall be made whole."

Mrs. Selwyn made no answer, but her countenance was far calmer than it had been since she had realised her danger. Mr. Jones then read the third chapter of St. John's Gospel; when he had concluded, my aunt repeated, as if to herself, "That *whosoever—yes,* WHOSOEVER believeth in Him shall not perish? Lord, I would believe in Thee; help Thou my unbelief."

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"Fear not," said the aged minister, "fear not, dear lady, to cling to Him. Only believe, only trust to none else. Your poor soul is naked, and He will clothe it with the precious robe of His perfect righteousness; it is helpless, He will strengthen it to pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death; and He will receive you 'complete in himself,' into His everlasting glory."

"May I dare to hope," faintly whispered the dying penitent, "that He has received my feeble prayer? that He is indeed MY Saviour?"

"On no other grounds would I bid you hope," answered the aged pastor; "here only can you be safe. Only apply to Him, no matter in how feeble words, as a guilty and condemned sinner, and beg Him to wash away in His own precious blood your manifold transgressions of thought, word, and deed, and He who never turned away, even from the vilest, will hear you, and give you peace, even that peace of God which, commencing here below, shall continue for evermore in a blessed eternity."

There now became visible, on the cold pale

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lips of the dying woman, a sweet smile, which increased as Mr. Jones, bending over her, quietly repeated passage after passage from the Word of Life: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." "Thou wilt cast our sins into the depths of the sea." "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

These verses, and many more, the good old man repeated, slowly and solemnly; and once he quoted the beautiful old hymn beginning—

> "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> 'Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,
> With joy shall I lift up my head."

He afterwards asked for a prayer-book, and read several prayers from the Order for the Visitation of the Sick. Among them was the commendatory prayer for a sick person at the point of departure; and well do I remember the stillness of that chamber of death, when he commended the soul of our dear sister into the hands of a faithful

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Creator, and most merciful Saviour, beseeching Him that it might be precious in His sight.

As the short winter's day drew near its close, some one in the room made an observation about the increasing darkness: suddenly, my dear aunt seemed roused from the torpor which had for the last hour overpowered her, and exclaimed, so loudly as to be heard by all present—"Darkness! oh, no! Light! I have found the true Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." There was a long pause; I heard my own name and Herbert's feebly pronounced—we stood together by the side of the bed.

"God bless you, Helen; Herbert, I give her to you;" and she added, "God teach you both, as He has taught me." Years afterwards this dying prayer was answered.

The hour of dissolution was visibly at hand. Lights had been brought into the room; but she who lingered on the confines of a world where they need no candle, neither light of the sun, could no longer gaze on earthly objects. The orbs of mortal vision

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had closed for ever; but to the eye of faith, even in the eleventh hour, all had become light.

"Is it night now?" asked the departing Christian. "I cannot see you, Helen; hold my hand, love."

"There shall be no night there," said Mr. Jones.

The smile that dwelt on the dying countenance grew more beautifully bright; the glazing eyes opened once again, but it was evident that they saw that which mortality cannot gaze upon; another moment, and the spirit had fled.

"Farewell! till we meet in another world," said Mr. Jones, solemnly, as he resigned the clay-cold hand he had taken, in token of a final adieu; "then shall this mortal put on immortality, being fashioned like unto His glorious body, through whose love and merits they who sleep in Him shall rise from the dust unto eternal life."

Very deep was my grief when I looked on the beloved face which had ever borne for me the expression of almost maternal tenderness. Herbert was by my side; he had

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shared with me the sacred duties of watching and nursing my dear aunt, and in his affection I sought consolation. There was much to be done, too, before the funeral could take place; so that I was not much left alone. In fact, I scarcely knew the extent of my sorrow, till the last remains of her who had been to me as a mother were carried to the silent tomb. Herbert followed as chief mourner; and when the sad procession had left the door of the house, I locked myself in my chamber, and gave way to an agony of bitter grief.

When my aunt's will was opened, it was found that she had left all her property to me, with the exception of a few legacies to her servants, and to some old pensioners, whom she had befriended for many years. Herbert had, with her consent, arranged with his sister that I should reside with her till I became his wife; and on the evening of Mrs. Selwyn's death, he induced a kind-hearted lady, whom he well knew, to come and stay with me so long as I remained in Oxford.

As soon as I recovered anything like

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composure, the first idea that possessed my mind was the strange difference between the mode of salvation set forth by Mr. Jones, and that which had been propounded by Mr. St. John Villiers. I spoke to Herbert on the subject, but he merely said—

"There can be no question, my Helen, as to Mr. Villiers's orthodoxy; for he is strictly guided by the Church, therefore he must be perfectly right; at the same time, Mr. Jones could do dear Mrs. Selwyn no harm: I was persuaded of that, when I so anxiously advised you to send for him. Your aunt had received all the consolations of the Church; and Mr. St. John Villiers tells me that he entertains not the slightest doubt concerning her safety. But we will not talk more of that, love; let us think, rather, how blessed a change is hers. A month since, she was a member of the mourning Church below—a participator in all the trials and afflictions of her children; now she has joined that vast multitude whom no man can number, who, having been washed in the laver of regeneration, and been made partakers of Christ's

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ordinances on earth, shall stand for ever before His throne with palms in their hands. 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

These, and similar observations, tended to soothe and compose my mind, and besides, I was much engaged. My arrangements for leaving Oxford occupied several weeks. From Lady Baynton I received a most kind and sisterly letter, containing a promise that she would come and fetch me herself, on any day I might choose to mention; for I had confided to her my difficulty in procuring a proper female companion for my journey. Herbert was to accompany us to Westmoreland, and Lady Baynton trusted that I should be very happy under her roof.

Her ladyship was, as I have already said, Herbert's only sister; and I was consequently prepared to love her very dearly; and, as the time settled for her arrival drew nigh, I even counted the hours which must elapse before I could see her. At last she came, and Herbert proudly introduced me to his beautiful sister. She was older than her brother by eight years; but possessed

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the same exquisite beauty of face and figure. She was tall and queenly in her bearing; her hair was raven black, very thick and glossy, and was simply parted off her broad white forehead, and knotted up at the back of her finely-shaped head in a manner at once graceful and classical. Her eyes were, in colour, dark soft brown; their expression it is more difficult to describe, suffice it to say, that there beamed from those lustrous orbs the same depth, the same sweet serenity, which had struck me so forcibly in the countenance of Herbert.

Though there was a general loftiness in Lady Baynton's manner, to me she was all that affection could desire. She insisted upon our calling each other by our Christian names. She described her happiness on hearing of her dear brother's engagement; and for my further satisfaction, I accidentally overheard her whisper to Herbert, "Yes, she *is* very lovely;" and I saw him turn to me with the fondest gaze of gratified pride and affection. To do myself justice, I felt no throbbings of vanity when I heard this, although I was certain that

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Lady Baynton thought that which she said; I was honestly glad that people thought me beautiful, for Herbert's sake; for my very existence seemed centred in him; nor should I have hesitated to resign all other advantages, for the sake of his love. Everything tended to strengthen my prepossession in Laura Baynton's favour.

I paid my farewell visits to my Oxford friends; I received Mr. St. John Villiers's parting call and advice; and finally, I went alone, on the day before my departure, into the church, where slept the mortal remains of my dear aunt and mother. I lingered in the darkening aisle, gazing on the lettered marble, and weeping freely, yet not bitterly, till the twilight began to fade into darkness, and then I cast a glance over the silent edifice where I had so often spent a peaceful hour, in musing upon my fair young mother and her early death. The next morning I bade adieu to the venerable towers of Oxford, and set out with Herbert and Laura for Sir Thomas Baynton's residence, on the beautiful banks of Lake Windermere.

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CHAPTER V.

"Shall we, whose virtue is so weak, yet have a will so strong;
And stand blind on the rocks, to choose the right path from the wrong;
To choose, perhaps, a love-lit hearth, instead of love and heaven;
A single rose for a rose-tree, that beareth seven times seven?"

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

WE reached Lady Baynton's abode on a beautiful day, towards the end of February. The evening was closing round us as we approached Windermere, but I had been absolutely delighted by the magnificent scenery which the latter part of our journey had afforded. Sir Thomas was in waiting to receive us; and Laura's joy seemed almost unbounded on meeting her husband again, after a week's separation. That night I saw but little either of the beautiful grounds or of the house; but the next morning, having slept till the sun was high in heaven,

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I hastily threw back my shutter; and then such a burst of beauty broke upon my sight, and lay spread before my enraptured gaze, that for a long time I stood at the window as if spell-bound, quite forgetting that it was necessary to dress for breakfast.

The mansion stood on a gentle eminence, that gradually sloped down to the glassy waters of the lake; luxuriant woods embosomed it, without at all intercepting the glorious view which it commanded. Far away, and near, stood the solemn hills and mountains; their dark stern summits veiled by a light white mist, on which the clear bright beams of the morning sun fell with an almost supernatural radiance. Above all, towered the majestic heights of The Langdales, while Loughrigg reflected his hoary head in the smooth deep water. The lake with its numerous islets seemed like a miniature archipelago, and the Holme and other islands appeared to be finely wooded. I could scarcely imagine what, in the summer season, the loveliness of the scene before me might be.

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At length I was roused by seeing Sir Thomas cross the lawn with his dogs, and looking at my watch, I found, to my dismay, that it was nearly ten o'clock; so I had nothing left but to conclude my toilet with the most inconvenient precipitation.

I soon discovered that Sir Thomas Baynton and his wife, so far from differing with Herbert as to religious views, went even further than he did; so, of course, the seed sown at Oxford, in the weedy soil of my yet unregenerate heart, grew up and flourished. Herbert remained at Merelands for some weeks, and then he returned to Oxford, promising to pay us another visit at midsummer; and it was agreed that, towards the end of the ensuing autumn, I was to become his bride. I had never been separated from my idol, even for one single day, since our engagement had taken place, and I should have felt lonely and dispirited in the extreme, had not Laura, as far as possible, supplied her brother's place; while Sir Thomas dragged me out into the open air in every gleam of sunshine. That lovely spring! Never did I again see in

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perfection that sweet season; but I returned to Westmoreland once more.

Spring is late in the north, but when it *does* come, it comes with a burst of richness and beauty beyond all description. Devonshire, fair sunny country as it is, and wildly magnificent as is some of its northern scenery, shrinks into nothing compared with the glory of Windermere, as it lies stretching out its blue crystal waters on the borders of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire. May brought with it a perfect shower of hawthorn, red, white, and pink! Every bush and hedge was clad in this lovely livery; then the fragrant lilac, the luxuriant laburnum with its graceful golden chains, the rich rhododendrons, the azaleas, the acacias, and, above all, the early roses, formed such a very Eden of sweets, as perfectly enchanted me, totally unprepared as I was for scenery so superlatively lovely. But if the flowers of May delighted me, those of June and July were still more abundant and more beautiful. One side of our abode was entirely covered with red roses and honeysuckle, and as it was the west front, the setting sun shone

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full on the thousand bright petals of the queenly flowers, till they glowed like rubies, ere the last rays faded on the mountain-tops.

In the beginning of July, Herbert came, and we assembled in the garden to welcome him. He arrived rather before the time specified, and when he led me into the house, telling me that he should stay a month, and finally return in September to take me whithersoever I might choose to go to spend the winter, my cup of happiness seemed full. At the tea-table, however, my spirits received a slight check. The eye of affection is very keen; and I fancied Herbert did not look by any means well. Pale he had always been, but now, a sickly languor seemed to be cast over his features. I anxiously inquired if he had been ill, and he assured me that he had neither been, nor expected to be, indisposed, though the heat of the weather, and the long rapid journey, had wearied him exceedingly. In the course of the evening, as he and I were conversing apart, he said, somewhat abruptly, and yet with some hesitation—

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"I suppose you have heard that Mr. St. John Villiers has joined the communion of the Church of Rome?"

I was indeed startled, and exclaimed, "Oh! this is very distressing; what a fearful example for his flock! Were you not deeply grieved, dear Herbert?"

He made no answer, a flush suffused his pale countenance, and he turned, as if glad of an interruption, to answer some trivial question which Laura just then put to the company in general, respecting modern church architecture. He entered so warmly into an argument about long and short pinnacles, and then branched off into such elaborate descriptions of the finest Italian churches, and of certain French cathedrals, that I quite forgot the little embarrassment which I had not failed to notice.

The first few days of Herbert's visit were spent in making a short tour through part of the Lake district, and the consequent animation and bustle, with the fatigue, which sent us all early to rest at the close of each day, prevented me from observing how very greatly he was changed—not in his affection

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for me, for that seemed daily to increase; but he appeared more thoughtful than ever, nay, at times, even absent. But no sooner were we again settled quietly at Merelands, than I began to observe, with extreme solicitude, the melancholy so visible in his countenance and manner. The subject of religion, formerly his favourite theme, was now never mentioned; frequently he sought long seasons of unbroken solitude, and once I was certain that I discerned traces of tears on his cheeks. That some heavy sorrow oppressed him I doubted not, and yet I did not like to sue for the confidence which he apparently did not wish to bestow. All this was distressing enough, but soon there arose a new cause for disquietude. The mental struggle within quickly produced very obvious ravages on a frame never strong, and in a short time Herbert became so ill, and looked so thin and sallow, that Laura would have sent, without delay, for medical advice, had not her brother positively forbidden any such proceeding; and thus this sojourn of his at Merelands, which I had looked forward to as a season of supreme delight,

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passed sadly away, and each day I became more anxious and unhappy.

Herbert's health became manifestly worse, his appetite left him, and his heavy eyelids at the breakfast-table fully proved his nights to be sleepless and unrefreshing. At length the time arrived when he was to return to Oxford. His manner towards me was replete with such sad and pensive tenderness, such a mournful depth of affection, that I became seriously alarmed, and determined, at any cost, on seeking an explanation before his departure. An opportunity for acting upon this decision presented itself, on the evening before the day appointed for his departure from Merelands.

It was the close of a summer day; the air had been intolerably hot, but now the sun was sinking behind the mountains, and a cool breeze came from the lake. Herbert invited me to walk with him; I gladly accepted his invitation; and we soon found ourselves quite alone on a green and woody slope, whose soft turf the mimic waves gently met. For a time neither of us spoke; at length Herbert said—

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"How long will it be, Helen, before we meet again in this lovely spot?"

"Do you not return in September, dear Herbert?" I asked with amazement, regarding, as I did, our marriage as an event certainly to take place during that month.

I was answered only by a deep sigh. A chill crept over me as I repeated the question, and then Herbert only replied, "Yes, God willing."

For one moment—only for one moment—the idea flashed across my mind that I was no longer beloved, and that he desired to be free from his engagement; and, previously excited and rendered nervous, I burst into tears. As soon as I could speak, I told Herbert why I wept.

Having seated me on the turf, he replied, solemnly, "God is my witness, Helen, that I love you better than ever; never were you so dear to me as you now are. I know, however, that my conduct must have appeared strange of late. I will own to you, that on spiritual matters my mind has been very deeply exercised, yet a seal seems to have been set on my lips, and to no mortal

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creature have I breathed the source of my suffering; for suffering it certainly is, and its ravages on my bodily health have, I am sure, been but too apparent to you. But wipe away your tears, my own Helen, the cloud will pass, I know it will, and I shall be happy again, as I was in the spring."

By degrees I became soothed; we began to converse on other subjects, and we watched the last crimson tint pass from the brow of the mountains, and the last shade of rich carnation fade away from the mist on Coniston, ere we turned our steps homeward. We had nearly reached the shrubbery-gate, when he asked the singular question, "At what rate, Helen, do you value my love?"

Such a question might not have been extraordinary from the lips of many lovers; but Herbert's love was of no ordinary kind —it was deep and superior, as his own exalted mind. I was rather startled, but replied calmly, "More than my own life, Herbert; more than the whole world" (I might have added, more than God or heaven). "But why do you ask? are you

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not satisfied as to the depth of my affection?"

He smiled, while he answered, "Well, Helen, one day I shall put your affection to the proof."

"Not as Griselda's husband did, I hope, for pity's sake," I replied, gaily; and I ran into the house, for the prayer-bell was ringing loudly, and Sir Thomas and his wife were standing in the hall ready to chide the loiterers.

The next morning Herbert left us at an early hour, and before the day was over I felt low-spirited, and even ill, not on account of his departure, for in six weeks he was to return, and our marriage was then to take place; but a feeling of gloom quite subdued my natural cheerfulness; a kind of presentiment of evil seemed to overshadow my path—and not without cause, for I remembered Herbert's despondent sigh, when on a recent occasion I had alluded to our approaching union; and that evening, when Laura would have consulted me on some matters relative to my wedding-costume, I begged leave to be excused from the

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discussion, on the plea of a violent headache.

Soon, however, I received letters from Herbert, and rejoiced to find that they were written in his usual good spirits. He represented himself as feeling stronger, and I doubted not but the journey had had a good effect upon his health. My hopes, however, were speedily overcast; his succeeding epistles were evidently constrained, and tinged throughout by a melancholy shade, and at last I heard nothing from him for ten days. My anxiety amounted almost to agony, for I felt quite certain that he must be severely ill.

On the eleventh morning I sat in my own room watching the road by which the postman usually came; I saw him approach with his bag, which was taken as usual into the breakfast-parlour. Sir James and Lady Baynton being absent from the apartment, the budget was laid on the table. Impatiently, I turned over the heap, and my heart beat high when I found a thick packet, directed by Herbert to myself. I took it to my dressing-room, and, locking myself in,

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broke the seal with a desperate determination to know the worst.

Herbert's letter ran as follows :—" I know, my dearest Helen, that my long silence must appear very much like neglect. Day after day I have striven to commit my thoughts to paper, and as often have found it impossible to do so. I now blame myself that I did not act towards you more explicitly during my stay at Merelands, but then the sacrifice was not perfect. I say *sacrifice*, because what I have done, and what I would do again, at any cost, *may* (though God Almighty forbid it) tear from me my dearest earthly treasure.

" You know, my Helen, that my fellow-student Morton first unveiled to my wondering gaze the errors of the Church of England, and when in astonishment I demanded the remedy, he explained to me the high and holy doctrines held by such men as Pusey and others. Instantly the conviction struck my very soul, that these happy servants of God were destined to arouse, by precept and example, the slumbering Anglican Church, and to effect the

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first steps towards a reconciliation between the rebellious daughter and her venerable mother of Rome. I was right, though Puseyism be even yet but as a folded and undeveloped bud. Much has been done, and trust me, the bud will ere long become 'a bright consummate flower,' producing a plentiful and precious seed, watered, it may be, by the blood of martyrs, yet, amidst all, growing up as a stately plant in the garden of our Lord.

"These opinions, which I held when I first knew you, were strengthened by my acquaintance with Prideaux, and, above all, with Mr. St. John Villiers, that holy man, who, having renounced all worldly good, friends, kindred, wealth, and country, is now gone to become a member of the blessed order of St. Francis, in Italy. Knowing Mr. St. John Villiers as I did, his renunciation of the name of Protestant agitated me powerfully; through his instrumentality I became acquainted with several Italian priests of the Catholic Church. The fire was already kindled in my heart —it needed but little to fan it into a

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flame. That which was lacking was supplied in the month of May last, and then I became fully convinced that the Anglican Church had greatly sinned in separating from her holy mother. That many Catholics believe and practise error, I do not deny; but then the Church is no more to be blamed on their account, than the College of Physicians is to be contemned because quacks and empirics delude the ignorant multitude.

"Now, my Helen, all this I intended to tell you in Westmoreland, but on the first evening of my arrival at Merelands I was infinitely grieved at the horror you evinced when I spoke of the public secession of Mr. St. John Villiers from the ranks of Protestantism. Oh! how sadly I failed at that moment in the holy courage and boldness with which my cause should have inspired me. I felt that you might reject the hand of one whom narrow-minded Protestants would call a *Roman* Catholic! Inexpressibly painful was this idea, which haunted me night and day; and yet I *dared* not draw back, even for you, my only love. The last evening

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that I spent with you, the avowal was on my lips; but you were already excited, and I forbore, and accordingly departed in silence.

"Now, Helen, you know the truth: I have left the Anglican Church; nevertheless, I am determined to pray and toil for her conversion and restoration, to my latest breath. The time is not far distant, when, like a repentant child, she will fly to the arms of her venerable mother, seeking forgiveness; and when she will once more be folded to the maternal bosom, so long desolate, so long yearning over her lost offspring.

"Helen, will you resign me, because the full light has shone upon my hitherto darkened soul? Oh! my beloved one, let me show you a more excellent way than that which we, hitherto erring and misled, have trodden! Come with me, Helen, not only in person, but in heart—come with me to the true shrine of Christ; and there let us together kneel and adore in humility of soul.

"And now, *if* you should turn from me in holy indignation, and cease to regard me

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with affection, perhaps, even with esteem, may I be strengthened to bear the heavy trial! The moment I receive from you a farewell, I shall quit England, and taking holy orders, bind myself to irrevocable celibacy; and there, in fasting, mortification, and prayer, I shall spend the remainder of my days, interceding day and night for your conversion, and that of my native country at large.

"But you cannot, you will not act thus, my own Helen? Nevertheless, if you do indeed desire it, I RELEASE YOU. If you knew the struggle it has cost me to write those three simple words, you would at least pity me. But surely you will not blast my every hope of earthly happiness?

"I do not ask you, in becoming my wife, to become also a Catholic—at least I do not demand it, or make it an essential condition; but you know I do *entreat* it with all my heart and soul. There cannot be a perfect union without entire assimilation on these highest and holiest matters; and I do believe, that ere long you too will see the truth, and with me

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join the only true catholic and apostolic Church.

"Write to me quickly, dearest Helen; this suspense, this intense anxiety, will kill me if it be much prolonged. God and our Lady bless you, and all good angels watch over you; so prays your own—HERBERT."

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CHAPTER VI.

> How hath she sinn'd?
> In bartering love—
> God's love for man's."
>
> ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

WHEN I had read Herbert's letter I sat for a few minutes almost paralysed. The idea of his renouncing Protestantism had never occurred to me; and notwithstanding the many semi-popish notions which I had contracted, I felt inexpressible anguish at the thought, that he whom I loved with all a woman's unbounded devotion, should have leagued himself with that false and apostate Church, which, as I had been taught, had ever made war, either open or covert, against the saints of God. At that moment there rushed across my mind, in terrible array, many solemn truths of holy Scripture. Many long

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forgotten lessons on the simplicity of the Christian faith; the instructions of my early years; my mother's last words of pious love to her thoughtless child; and the dying hours of my Aunt Selwyn, appeared as if crowded together upon the page of my startled memory.

"Romanism," I exclaimed, "is not of God; Tractarianism is not of God. Yet what do I say? Shall I, a poor simple girl, dare to set up my opinion against that of the many learned and pious men who hold Tractarian doctrines—the very elders of the Church?"

Oh, blind, strange infatuation! delusion of the Evil One! What were the elders of *any* Church, when the blessed Bible lay open before me? *Here* was the glorious noontide sun; *there*, a flickering taper; and I, in my madness and foolishness, took the taper for my guide, saying, "This will light my way to heaven." Oh! if in that hour of doubt I had but *prayed*, instead of *reasoning;* asked for wisdom from above, instead of arguing with a degree of sophistry befitting an accomplished Jesuit, against the

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tenor of my own convictions, I might have escaped much bitter sorrow. As it was, the conflict in my mind gradually subsided, and left me darker than ever. At length I recollected that I must necessarily answer Herbert's letter. I dreaded the effect of any further suspense on a frame naturally feeble, and obviously suffering under the debilitating effects of mental anxiety; and having re-perused his letter, I sat down, without one single petition for Divine guidance on this, the most momentous affair of my life, to write my reply.

What that reply was, no one need doubt; suffice it to say, that it was exactly what Herbert *wished,* yet scarcely dared to hope that he might receive. I did not, indeed, give him any idea that I intended to follow his example in becoming a Romanist; nevertheless, I promised to read attentively some books which, in a postscript, he undertook to send for my perusal.

We kept early hours at Merelands, and before I had finished my letter, the first dinner-bell rang. I was remarkably talkative that day at dinner; yet Laura discerned

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that I was ill at ease, and being herself very anxious about Herbert, she asked me, as soon as the servants had left the room, if I had heard from him that morning. I replied, by placing his epistle in her hand. She read it without comment, except once exclaiming, while the tears rose to her eyes, "Dear, noble Herbert!" Then, with my permission, she handed the letter over to her husband. When he had perused its contents, he turned to me with an expression of great anxiety; and his wife said, "Oh, do speak, Helen; tell us that you will not break our Herbert's heart! But I know you will not; what will you do?"

"I engaged," I replied, "to become Herbert's wife, unconditionally, and I dare not break a solemn vow, although it were not ratified at the altar; and besides, there is not, I believe, so much difference as I once thought between the Anglo and the Roman Catholic. Herbert," I proudly continued, "generously offers to release me from my engagement, but I will not be released; and to this effect I have already written to him."

"Dear, dear Helen," replied Laura, "you

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are indeed worthy to become Herbert's wife: I felt confident that you would not finally condemn my brother to a life of loneliness and disappointment; yet I scarcely expected you to act so decidedly and so instantaneously as you have done. Bless you for it, however; and as to what you sensibly observe, about the similarity between Anglo and Roman Catholics, I must say, that I think the nearer the former approach to the latter, the better; and that both in principle and practice."

Sir Thomas then interposed, saying, "It has long been in my mind, dear Helen, to build a chapel on our own grounds, and to seek for it a pastor of the Church of Rome; for, like Herbert, I am fully convinced that salvation is to be found only within its pale, although neither Laura nor I have, as yet, had the moral courage to avow this publicly; but now that my brother-in-law has set us such an example of noble disregard of self, even consenting to sacrifice what is infinitely dearer to him than life, rather than withhold his testimony to the truth; now that he has made us ashamed of our own

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timorous indecision, we will hesitate no longer, and I feel secure that you, Helen, will follow in our steps."

After Herbert's communication of that morning I was surprised at nothing; besides, I had always thought that Sir Thomas leaned to Rome, more decidedly even than Herbert; but still I felt a little astonished. I asked Lady Baynton if she had any previous knowledge of her brother's determination to become a Roman Catholic. She assured me that she had not; that he had not even hinted it during his visit, and that she had been equally at a loss with myself to account for the singular depression under which he had so palpably laboured. I was glad to hear this, for it gave me pleasure to know, that if I had not been in Herbert's confidence from the beginning, his own sister was in the same circumstances; I could not, therefore, as I had thought of doing, reproach him with reserve.

The preparations for my marriage now went on with redoubled vigour. Only one month remained before the appointed day. The promised box of books arrived, and I

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began to read them diligently: moreover, I received glowing accounts of the services of the Romish Church, so that with little siege my weak heart was won to fearful error. The twentieth of September was fixed for our wedding-day, and Herbert had promised to come to Merelands on the eighteenth, when my presence was required at Oxford, about some business which I neither tried nor cared to understand. This put off the ceremony for a fortnight, and Sir Thomas accompanied me into Oxfordshire, where I was introduced to Herbert's Italian friends; and so well did they do their work, that in a very few days I had resolved to become a member of the Church of Rome. To describe Herbert's delight would be impossible; but to say that I was quite happy would be untrue, for a feeling of dread frequently oppressed me when I thought on the step I intended to take. I paid a visit, too, to the graves of my mother and aunt; and there Mr. Jones's words rang in my ears, and such was my uneasiness, that I left the church much sooner than I had purposed, and wandered about the churchyard.

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It was a soft autumnal afternoon, and the scene was very fair, although tame in comparison with the wild woods and vales of the North, bright as they were with a thousand brilliant hues. Still, the landscape possessed charms for me. In childhood's happy hours, I had been accustomed to go thither to think about my dear mother; there I used to gather flowers and look at the silvery Thames, and wonder how it could grow into such a great river, as people said it was when it reached London. Memory had carried me back to those childish days, and as I mused on bygone times, I became so absorbed as not to hear a rather heavy footstep, till I saw a gentleman, far advanced in years, and in a clerical dress, standing before me. I was quite surprised, and not much pleased, to recognise Mr. Jones himself; nevertheless, the feeling of displeasure was evanescent, and I cordially gave him my hand, and inquired after his health.

After some general conversation, the old clergyman said, "I am told you are going to be married, Miss Bury; excuse an old man for making such an impertinent observation,

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but I heard the report only last night, and I am anxious to know if it be true."

"It is quite true," I replied, smilingly; "I am about to be married to Mr. Travers, who, you will remember, was present at my dear Aunt Selwyn's death."

Mr. Jones sighed, and then he said, "My dear young lady, will you pardon me if I give you one word of advice before we part, in all probability to meet no more on earth? I know that Mr. Travers and Mr. St. John Villiers agree but too well on religious subjects. I would then affectionately urge you, Miss Bury, to take solely the Word of God for your guide; never read it without prayer to the 'Father of Lights,' that He may pour upon you His Holy Spirit, and show you therein His perfect law, and the only way of salvation through His crucified Son."

I made no answer, and Mr. Jones resumed: "You know, dear Miss Bury, there is but *one Mediator* between God and men; the man Christ Jesus. Oh! let nothing ever tempt you to kneel at an idol's shrine, calling upon sinful dust like yourself to help you. Do not be angry with me," he added, seeing my

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colour rise; "I speak plainly, I know—but is there not a cause? In this day, when Popery is struggling by highways and byeways for the ascendency—when, in this very city of ours, in the very midst of our fathers' ancient halls, the fearful system is growing, and thriving, and leading men blindfold to destruction, is it not time to speak openly?"

"You wrong these renovators of the Church," said I; "you condemn them without knowing them."

The aged minister looked at me mournfully, and shaking his head, answered, "Wolves in sheep's clothing! robbers in the garb of shepherds are they! I tell you, Miss Bury, that this Anglicanism is the half-way resort of loiterers between England and Rome. These tracts that are now appearing, are just Popery made easy. I shall not live to see the fearful effect of this quick and wide-spreading heresy; but you and your children will see it, ay, and mourn it too, when it will be too late."

Much more would have been said, I doubt not, but just then a woman came to beg Mr. Jones to call and see her son who was ill,

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and so my old friend kindly bade me farewell; and wishing me every happiness, and praying that I might ever be enabled to know error from truth, he left me in no enviable state of mind.

I had long been living in constant and daily transgression of the *first* commandment, for Herbert was my idol—for him I was willing to stifle the voice of conscience—for him I was ready to peril my soul. And now I was about to violate with like flagrancy the second commandment. "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image; thou shalt *not bow down to them*," said the Almighty; and I was deliberately resolved to kneel before images of saints, and relics and crosses of wood and stone.

At length my stay at Oxford came to an end, and I returned to Windermere. My bridal morning came, and Herbert and I were united. We left Merelands for London, for Herbert desired to make there his first public profession of the Romish faith; and there, also, he wished me to be received into the same communion. I was regularly and cautiously initiated—I confessed, received

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absolution, and prepared to receive the Eucharist on the following day, together with my husband. I shall never forget that day. My agitation was excessive; I awoke at an early hour, after a restless and disturbed night, and marvelled to find Herbert yet sleeping quietly; but the hours passed on; the Mass was said, and from the hands of a venerable-looking priest we both received the wafer, which, as that false Church teaches her children, is the very body and blood of Jesus Christ.

I gaze, *now* at this very time, on the misty summit of the Langdales; they stand afar off, rearing their proud heads to the clouds, unchanging, just as they were on the morning of my marriage, when I looked at them with a farewell feeling, almost affectionate. How greatly are my circumstances changed! Emily, who, though not present, was well remembered; Laura and her husband, and my Herbert—all sleep in the silent dust. Yet I will not sorrow; natural tears will flow when I write these beloved names, especially those of Emily and Herbert. Then, when I stood among the fair woods and vales of

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lovely Windermere, a happy and beloved bride, I knew nothing of true happiness; I was of the earth, earthy; I loved the beautiful world, but I knew of none more glorious. Then came darkness; years of forgetfulness of God; and then——THE STORM! Yet thanks be unto His most holy name for that fierce tempest. True, it laid in the dust my earthly joys. My hope was removed like a tree, and slowly and gradually there receded from me wealth, beloved friends, and health, till I was left alone and comfortless in the world. The storm is hushed now, my soul is at peace. I can think of my dear Emily, and my still dearer husband, not as inhabitants of the voiceless chambers of the tomb, but as glorified spirits, mingling in the sweet and everlasting song which they swell forth who depart to be with Jesus. The sorrow of a Christian is like the darkness of early morning to an earthly traveller. It is dark now, all is gloom; he cannot see around him the beauty of the green hills and the shining river—nay, the mountains seem to shut him in, and the stream rolls sullenly along. But does he grieve and lament? Oh! no; the

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sun will rise presently. Does he say, I shall never reach the end of my journey? No; he waits patiently, and watches the east, and soon there comes a streak of rosy light, another, and another; brighter and brighter wears the morning, the shadows disappear, and the day shines forth in glory. Surely this is the case with the pilgrim to Zion: *he* cannot see the road, the waves of mortal sorrow roll around him, but he knows that the morning is at hand, and that very soon a sun that shall set no more will rise and gladden his abode—not here, in the land of sin and grief, but in his Father's kingdom, where the griefs and toils of the way are all forgotten. But it is time now to speak of my first days of wedded life.

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CHAPTER VII.

"And take the thought of this calm vesper-time,
With its low murmuring sounds and silvery light,
On through the dark days fading from their prime,
As a sweet dew to keep your souls from blight:
Earth will forsake! oh, blessed to have given
The unbroken heart's first fragrance unto Heaven."

FELICIA HEMANS.

AFTER a short sojourn in London, my husband and myself prepared for a longer journey, Rome being our destination. We were to spend the winter in that ancient city, and to return to England in the following spring. I was all joy and animation. It had ever, even in childhood, been my desire to visit that Rome, of which, in my Brindsley Court days, I had read such wonderful tales; and with such a companion as Herbert, who had, moreover, traversed the same ground before, I anticipated a season of exquisite delight.

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I was not disappointed. When we left England, the bright summer flowers had faded, and the glorious woods of the North were crimsoned with the rich but dying hues of autumn—a few more weeks, and they would be arrayed in all the dark majesty of winter; but no sooner did I set my foot upon the sunny South, than a new spring seemed to burst upon my view. Glowing roses, fragrant jasmine, and the exquisite blossom of the myrtle, shone as brilliantly as they had done in fair Westmoreland during the days of June and July.

I shall not enter into any description of the marvels of the "eternal city." Of course, my dear husband was desirous of making my time pass as agreeably as possible —and above all things, he sought to impress upon me the sublimity of the faith which we now both professed. To this end he omitted no opportunity of bringing under my observation the dazzling pomp and soul-enthralling fascinations of its countless ceremonies; and his endeavours were far from fruitless. Sometimes, indeed, I remembered the quiet, happy Sabbaths at Brindsley; the sacred

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solemnity which lay on the lovely country; the calm, unbroken peace which dwelt on hill and valley; the rustic little church, the devoted pastor, and the sweet tones of prayer and praise uttered by the simple band over whom he watched with a shepherd's care. Yes, those were scenes never to be effaced.

Often when the triumphal choral service swelled through the aisles of St. Peter's—often when the priest, arrayed in his gorgeous robes, stood to delude those blinded worshippers by blasphemously professing to offer again that sacrifice of the Lamb, *once* slain for the sins of the world—something like a misgiving would arise in my heart, to the effect that perchance the faith of my earlier days was indeed the faith of the Bible. Those happy Sabbath evenings, when, assembled in the large dining-room of Brindsley Court, we listened to our beloved instructresses as they sought to win us to the service of God, by setting forth the love of Him who first loved us, and gave Himself for us, a propitiation for *all* our sins—those quiet sacred hours, blessed to so many of the youthful band, *could* not be

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forgotten; then the walk in the garden in the long summer evenings, when, with Emily for my companion, I had trodden the grassy paths of the little wood, and heard her gentle voice speaking of a brighter and better world, where sin dwelleth not—when her words, telling of the glorious realities of revelation, mingled with the song of birds, and the drowsy murmur of wild bees; *that*, too, I felt, must be remembered till life should cease. They *were* remembered during my years of darkness—those few years of spiritual darkness, yet great earthly bliss; alas! it was joy which belonged to earth alone; and when sorrow came, when the beloved ones were gathered to the grave, when my aching eye rested on many a vacant seat, and when many a precious voice was missed in the silent household, then these long-departed hours of holy converse came back, brightened and endued with a power to raise my drooping spirit far above the grief that dwelt within.

But the winter passed; and much as both Herbert and myself admired the glories of that southern clime, we rather wished to

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watch the fresh opening of spring, and its budding loveliness, in our own dear English, or rather Welsh, land—for it was amid the beautiful scenery of North Wales that my husband's estates principally lay. So we waited till an Italian spring had fairly set in, and then we left the South, and came back to England in the month of April. A few days found us at Abergwych, my future home.

The mansion was a large ancient house, many centuries old; and round it was spread a noble park, covered with rich timber. Through the grounds a river rolled its rapid course, and in one of the woods there were several cascades, and a large clear pool, where the willows bent down till their leaves touched the transparent water. On all sides rose hills, and mountains, and though the scene was not quite so lovely as fair Westmoreland's landscapes, it was very beautiful; and my heart throbbed with mingled pride and joy to know that, amidst this enchanting scenery, I was to pass my days, and that in these ancient halls I should reign uncontrolled mistress.

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However brilliant may be the glories of a foreign land, none, I think, can surpass those of an English spring. True, there are many blighting winds, and cold outpourings from sullen clouds; but when the golden sunshine *does* come, making all the green earth glad, it drives away all memory of the gloomy hours of storm and darkness. So fades the painful remembrance of human sorrow, when the sky of life becomes once again calm, and it may be for a time, a very brief time, cloudless.

How sweet it is to watch each green leaf unfolding its delicate hues! First, the boughs lose the blackness of winter, and there is a warm living colour in the branches —then ten thousand whitish looking buds make their appearance, and day by day, through storm and sunshine, they grow greener and greener, and larger and more numerous, till on some breezy April morning we hear the *sound of leaves.* It is melodious music, after the dull roar of the winter wind, to listen to the dreamy murmurs of the breath of spring among the tender leaves. The first rustling in the tree

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tops, the first scent of violets, the first timid snowdrop, are all like a first burst of harmonious music. And there is *song*, too, material song, in the free sunny greenwood; "for the winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come:" and though no "turtle is heard in our land," other voices there are that have crossed from afar the blue depths of ocean, and sing in the forests; while hill and valley echo their sweet notes of rejoicing.

It is a very hopeless task to write about spring—one might write a set of volumes upon it, and still find abundant employment for the pen. The pencil of the painter, the numbers of the poet, have for ages been employed in delineating its beauties, and they will continue to be so till ages shall have ceased to roll. The lawgiver of Israel spoke of seed-time; and Solomon, in his Song of Songs, has made use of the bright imagery of spring-glories in describing the hope of the Church of Christ. The works of man may be described and commented on till human ingenuity is wearied; but with the works

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of God—nature, beautiful, faithful nature, the production of our beneficent and loving Father—it is otherwise; the theme is inexhaustible. Sometimes, persons who are both intellectually and (what is of far more value) spiritually enlightened, utter on this subject apparent contradictions. What is more common than to hear the same poet, and a Christian poet too, speak of the world as "this dreary world!" "this cold, dark world!" and also as "this glorious world!" "this beautiful world!" Persons who do not *think* accurately, and particularly very young persons, may easily be puzzled by such seemingly antagonistic expressions; but the matter is simple enough. *God's* world *is* beautiful and glorious, causing the heart of man to exult in life, and in the capability of observation which his Creator has bestowed upon him. The sentence declaring it to be "*very good*" was uttered nearly six thousand years ago; from century to century has the strain been caught up; and now, at this day, countless hearts gaze on God's earthly glories, and swell, as they gaze, with exultation and gratitude, saying, "Amen! Thy works, O

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Lord, are good and perfect." It is man, it is sin, that has wrought the desolation that is in the world. Wherever the hand of man has been, there we may trace the footsteps of "the spoiler"; he it is that makes the coldness, the dreariness of earth. The time, however, *will* come when sin shall cease, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness.

But to return to my own history. The springtime passed, and the soft, glowing beauty of summer, and the still more gorgeous splendour of autumn, succeeded, before any event worth recording occurred. A year had passed since I had become Herbert's wife, a year of happiness unmingled, save indeed by the voiceless upbraidings of my conscience, which told me that I had sacrificed religion and principle to an earthly idol. But those faithful warnings were disregarded, and silenced by all kinds of excuse, and in time had almost ceased to recur. Herbert and I read, walked, and talked together; we were never apart for one hour, and brightly and swiftly the days glided on with my beloved companion.

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The flowers had nearly all faded, a few hardy fuchsias and frost-bitten dahlias mingled their still brilliant hues with the pale yellow and lavender stars of the sober Michaelmas daisies, and the leaves lay thick upon the ground, when I became a mother. It was a moment of inexpressible delight when I saw Herbert take his little daughter in his arm, and gaze on us both, as though the world had never before contained two such treasures.

On the first day of my appearance downstairs, a letter was put into my hand. Full well I knew the thin foreign paper, the familiar handwriting, and the tiny seal which bore the initial letters E. L. It came of course from Emily, my still much-beloved Emily. By some mischance, a letter written on the day following my marriage had never reached her. Hers directed to me at Merelands had been forwarded to Rome, but from some error in the address never arrived at its destination. I, of course, had no idea on what part of the Continent Emily might be; nevertheless, I continued to write, but unsuccessfully, till at length, when I had just

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determined to give up further efforts, for a time at least, one of my letters, written immediately after my arrival at Abergwych, found its way to Baden-Baden, where my friend was then residing. Had not Emily possessed the true confidence of friendship, she might have supposed that, engrossed by new affections, I had ceased to love her; but it was not so: her mind was proof against such unfounded imaginations; she longed to hear again of my welfare, but she attributed my silence, as I did hers, to its true cause, —a real ignorance of each other's location. In the epistle written after my marriage, I had said but little, merely telling her that the wedding had taken place, and assuring her of my undiminished affection; and not one word did I hint of my defalcation in the matter of religious profession, so Emily was quite in the dark; she feared, indeed that I had become worldly, and that I had ceased to regard "things spiritual" in the high and decided light in which I had considered them in my younger days, but that was all: I did not mean to deceive Emily, but a few lines were all that my

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husband would, at that time, allow me to write. Well do I remember penning that letter, for there it was that I, for the first time, signed myself Helen Travers. The faded characters are before me now, and I, who then tremblingly traced the new sweet name, am faded too—faded outwardly, never again to revive in grace and beauty, but inwardly, I trust, renewed and made lovely by the indwelling of that blessed Spirit who saith to human hearts, as He said to the shapeless void of chaos, "Let there be light."

Once again I sat down to write to Emily Leicester, and as she spoke of returning to England, I entreated her to come straight to Abergwych Hall as to her own home. My husband added a few lines, begging her not to act upon ceremony, but to consider him, in right of his wife, as an old and attached friend. Both Herbert and myself agreed not to speak of our renunciation of the English Church. "One cannot write fully," I said, "in the compass of a letter, and we shall never obtrude our sentiments on Emily. She will have her own

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apartments, where she may always command retirement, and when with us, she shall never hear a word that can possibly wound her feelings; so we had better defer all mention of religious differences till she is beneath our roof. She would be so shocked," I continued, "if suddenly told that we had become 'Roman Catholics'; and when with us, we can tell her gently of the change which has taken place with both of us." Herbert commended my caution, and the letter was dispatched.

Months passed away, and Emily was detained by the lingering illness of a relative with whom she resided. Her letters were not long; they spoke of heavy sorrow, and of a heart bowed down with grief, but like myself, she deferred all important communications till we should meet. One passage ran thus:—"I have very much to tell you, my beloved, my only earthly friend; my way has been strewed with thorns, as yours with flowers, but soon I trust to see you, and then I can tell you of my sorrows, and listen to the recital of your joys. Think not, my Helen, that I have grown gloomy. One

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peace, 'the peace that passeth all understanding,' is still mine. Earth did not give it to me, and earth with her bitterest trials cannot deprive me of it."

My little girl was called Grace, a fitting name for my lovely child, who, with her beloved father, is gone to the world where there is no more death. She grew and prospered exceedingly. The office of nurse-maid in our establishment was a mere sinecure, for by day and by night, either Herbert or myself had her in our arms. Little do mothers know the depth of the pleasure which they lose by committing their little ones to the care of hirelings.

When Grace was fourteen months old, another daughter was given to us, whom we called Rosamond, and then my cup of happiness seemed filled even to overflowing; so sweet it was to a mother's heart to watch my little Grace in her childish glee clapping her hands at her infant sister, or gazing on the soft tiny face of the fair baby, with wonder almost amounting to awe.

Then came another epistle from Emily, stating that her grand-aunt, on whom she

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had been so long attending, was no more; and that as soon as she had paid the last duties to the departed, she purposed to commence her journey towards Wales. Several weeks passed in preparation for her accommodation, and in mutually happy anticipations; at length the specified day arrived, and Herbert took the carriage to Carnarvon to meet my friend, while I paid a final visit of inspection to the rooms destined for her use. All was arranged to my satisfaction, and by way of making the perfect yet more perfect, I hurried to the green-house and the garden, and having collected several blooming plants and bright spring flowers, I placed them as my taste directed, in different parts of her dressing room and boudoir.

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CHAPTER VIII.

"Once more we meet; and oh! how changed art thou!
What shade of grief lies heavy on thy brow?
Thy pure pale cheek is whiter than of yore,
What hath befallen thee on that far shore?"

I HAD scarcely seated myself in the drawing-room, with my little Rose in my arms, and Grace on an ottoman at my feet, before the sound of carriage-wheels came from the winding road which led through the park. In five minutes Emily was clasped to my heart, and it was some time before I could calmly gaze at her, and see the sad change which less than four years had wrought on her youthful face.

When the excitement of our meeting was over, the faint flush passed from her cheek, and pale as she had ever been from the first day of our acquaintance, her features now wore a marble-like hue that at once startled

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and distressed me. Her rich dark hair still fell in soft natural ringlets, and her calm hazel eyes had acquired an expression far deeper than the mild gentle seriousness which had distinguished them in our school-days. Emily herself, my own beloved and valued friend, was before me, the same—yet oh, how changed! It needed neither penetration, nor the watchful glance of affection, to detect the traces of some heavy, overwhelming sorrow; and I longed to take the dear pale form into my arms, and to weep with her over the bitterness of the past, whatever it might be.

That night Emily was wearied with her journey, and she retired very early to her apartment. I accompanied her, and saw her settled for the night. As I kissed her, and bade her good-night, she said, "Helen, dear, we will talk to-morrow, now I am too tired; besides, mine is a long, sad history; yet not altogether sad," she added, seeing the tears gather in my eyes, "I have many bright blessings; countless spiritual ones, and not a few earthly ones; and your love, my long tried friend, I count foremost in these last."

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I left Emily, and returned to my husband. I was not at all sorry to avoid anything approaching to explanation on her first night of residence under our roof; and had she remained till our usual hour of retirement, we should not have felt quite comfortable, when the time for evening prayers arrived. On the following morning the family devotions were over before Emily descended; and, immediately after breakfast, Herbert mounted his horse, and rode to visit a friend at a few miles' distance. Emily brought her netting into my dressing-room, and Rose, being asleep in her cradle, and Grace busily occupied in building a gigantic structure of wooden bricks, we began to talk of bygone days. Emily said—

"Well, Helen, love! I must tell you all that has passed since you and I parted at Brindsley. The sooner I tell you the better, for it must be told; and the recital will require no little strength. Of the six months after your leaving Brindsley Court I need say nothing. We corresponded so regularly at the time that you knew all that happened. You knew, too, how my relations, imagining

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that my education must be incomplete unless I spent a year or two in France, wrote to their friends in London to request them to select for me a school in Paris. That was my second trial; my first was parting with you. Brindsley had been my home for so many years that it cost me floods of tears, and many hours of prayer and mental discipline, before I could subdue the rebellious feelings that rose in my bosom whenever I contemplated my speedy removal from the dear friends and scenes of my youth. But the time came, the mandate for my leaving Devonshire arrived; and for the last time I knelt with my beloved governess and companions in the old dining-room, where for many years, morning and night, we had gathered together to implore the blessing of our heavenly Father on the whole assembled family. I was laden with presents, some costly ones, and some very trifling, but all equally precious, as mementoes of the love and kind feelings of those with whom I had so long associated.

"At length I reached my new abode. Madame Rouillet resided in the Faubourg

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St. Germains. Her household comprised four teachers, two English and two French, and forty-four pupils. I was soon settled amid fresh scenes and fresh companions, and oh! how different was the abode which now sheltered me from the happy home which I had just quitted! Of course, madame, her French teachers, and more than two-thirds of her pupils, were Roman Catholics; and you, Helen, I am sure, will feel for me, when I tell you that every morning and night, we (that is, the Protestant boarders) were compelled to kneel with the French girls, and listen to prayers and invocations the most blasphemous. It is true our Protestant principles were never *openly* attacked; but there was a covert system of setting forth Romish doctrines continually going on from day to day. The Roman Catholics were instructed on theological points in the presence of the English pupils; from time to time the diligent scholars were rewarded by being taken to witness some gorgeous and soul-enthralling ceremony of the false Church of Rome, just as children at home for the holidays are taken to

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an exhibition, or to other places of entertainment.

"Till I went to Madame Rouillet's, I had no just notion of the real nature of Popery; but soon I began to comprehend its soul-destroying yet specious delusion. I thank my God that He gave me light to see the snare spread for my weakness, and strength utterly to turn my back upon it. But you are not well, Helen; you are very pale; all your beautiful colour is gone; you are faint, surely."

I replied, that I did feel very faint; and attributing my sudden attack to exhaustion, I rang the bell for refreshments. When Emily again reverted to her story, she began by saying that she was rather alarmed at some of the letters which I wrote from Oxford. She had fancied, when she saw Romanism as it really was, there existed some shade of resemblance between its doctrines and those which I propounded as being held by the holy men of that University.

"Well, Emily," I replied rather hastily, "I have a great deal to say on that point;

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but finish your story, love, first, and then I will tell mine; if we mingle them, we shall never get a clear narrative of what has passed with both during our separation."

"You are right, love," Emily answered; "I will go on. Another circumstance deeply afflicted me during my Parisian sojourn. Not only were the little Protestant party exposed to all the crafts and wily delusions of Romanism, but they daily witnessed a total disregard of many Divine obligations; habits, too, of dissipation and frivolity, which I am certain no sober-minded English person would desire for his child, were engendered by constant association with those who considered mere worldly amusement, or, as they termed it, enjoyment, the great aim of existence. Then came desecration of the Sabbath, and, I grieve to say, the Roman Catholics were not alone guilty in this matter. Nearly all the girls, both French and English Protestants (and there were several of the former), as soon as they returned from their respective places of worship, gave themselves up to all kinds of gaiety and idle conversation.

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"Eighteen months and more I passed in this society; and great, indeed, was the mercy of my God and Saviour, who upheld me in a straight course, and preserved me from the temptations that hourly beset my path. Never for one moment did I doubt the falsity of the Romish doctrines, which so constantly assailed my ear. But I was alone; 'a stranger in a strange land;' language, habits, and faith, were all alike unfamiliar. There were times when my heart yearned and pined for companionship. Mine was the sorest species of solitude, it was isolation in a crowd; it was being alone, with multitudes thronging around. Still, there was One to whom I might pour out my full heart, though the noisy talk of the three French girls who shared my sleeping apartment very much impeded the exercises of prayer, reading, and meditation. Yet many sweet hours I passed, while the rest of my companions were wrapped in midnight slumbers; and every now and then came letters from my beloved Devonshire friends, like gleams of calm, soft sunshine, breaking through the fogs and clouds of November gloom. At length, I

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received a letter from my grand-aunt, who had left India in the hope of recovering her shattered health; she had been spending a summer at Harrogate and Ramsgate, when, the German springs being recommended by the faculty, she resolved to visit them: and, as she considered that by this time my education must be quite completed, she determined to take charge of me, and thus secure for herself a constant companion.

"With little regret I quitted France, to meet my aunt at Ostend, whither she was escorted by an old ecclesiastical friend. I had never seen her, and in fancying what she might be like, I found much of my childish antipathy to new forms and faces returning upon me with terrible energy. I reached Ostend tired with travelling and nervous anxiety, and found my aunt to be a little old woman, of very grave aspect, wearing a rich but particularly stiff and sombre costume: she was accompanied by an elderly waiting woman, whose dress was arranged in humble imitation of that of her mistress, and whose countenance, from long tutorage and communication, had acquired a similar expression.

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A very large prayer-book, and a very little lap-dog, completed the group: and my heart sank at the bare idea of spending, it might be, some years, in the companionship of such very solemn looking persons and things.

"My poor aunt's complexion was of that dull yellow hue only acquired by long residence and indulgent living in hot climates. Mrs. Martha, the antiquated maiden or widow who acted as tiring-woman, looked as though she had long since voted the world and all that it contained to be very disagreeable; the lap-dog evinced strong symptoms of furious hostility towards myself, and rebellion against Mrs. Martha and her mistress, when ordered by them to be quiet; and the prayer-book, containing a supplementary 'week's preparation,' and many broad reading marks, struck me as bearing a most solemn aspect. But I was welcomed, and I felt pleased, for my aunt spoke kindly, and her stiff features relaxed into a smile (Mrs. Martha's going through a similar process), while she kissed me, and bade me sit down on the sofa and make myself comfortable. A refreshing meal was served; my

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aunt said that I was partly like my mother and partly like my father, and she appeared pleased upon the whole with my replies to her numerous questions. At length she observed that I must be very much tired; and Mrs. Martha fully coinciding in this opinion, I retired to my room, feeling much happier than I had done on first meeting with my relative.

"In a day or two, my aunt and myself, with Mrs. Martha, and the dog, and prayer-book, found ourselves shut up in a close carriage, *en route* for Cologne. It was not a very enlivening journey, for all my companions slept the greater part of the day; so I had recourse to the prayer-book when tired of looking out upon the country, and read the pedigree of my family inscribed upon the blank leaf at the end, and soon I became very glad that the huge volume formed a portion of our equipment; for while Mrs. Martha, and her mistress, and Zelie, slumbered peacefully, I could read the Psalms for the day.

"When we reached Cologne, it took some time to effect anything like settled

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domestication ; but all turmoils must come to an end at last ; and so in process of time we were happily accommodated with desirable lodgings, and I began to feel in some degree at home. The first month of our residence at Cologne was calm and peaceful ; my aunt, though never very affectionate, was always kind, and generally considerate. Mrs. Martha took a fancy to me, and even the snarling Zelie left off showing her teeth every time I approached her cushion. I spent much time in study, and my aunt engaged for me masters to instruct me in the German language, and to carry on my musical acquirements. I played tolerably well, and was often employed during the evening in amusing her by my performances. I had abundance of leisure, too, for sacred engagements. My aunt never came from her room till late in the forenoon, and I spent several hours each morning in the sweet duties of religious retirement. Peace without, and peace within ; in the world, yet sharing not its cares and perplexities, I went on my way calmly and cheerfully, and with a thankful heart towards Him whose

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goodness had brought me thus far on my earthly pilgrimage. At length, the calm passed, and I learned the strength of human attachment. I met with one whom I thought to be a 'kindred spirit,' one whom I vainly dreamed loved me with a changeless love; perhaps I sought not, as I should have done, Divine guidance; at all events, I gave my own heart, with all its first fervent affections, to receive, as I blindly believed, tenfold love in return."

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CHAPTER IX.

"Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted;
If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters returning
Back to their springs like the rain, shall fill them full of refreshment;
That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain.
Patience! accomplish thy labour of love, accomplish thy work of affection!"

LONGFELLOW.

"DURING our brief abode at Cologne, we had formed several intimacies with English families visiting the Rhine. One family in particular, bearing the name of Morton, carried on with us a constant interchange of civilities, till at length scarcely a day passed without our meeting. This family consisted of a father and mother, one daughter and two sons. They were all amiable persons, but the elder son was far superior to the rest in point of intellect and personal advantages. Arthur Morton was about thirty years of age; he visited us more

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frequently than did his parents or his brother and sister, but he generally brought with him books or flowers for my aunt. I could not but regard him with great interest; intellect so powerful, imagination so brilliant, had never crossed my path before; and I believed, also, that he was under the influence of Divine truth—nay, I *still* believe so; it would ill become me to judge hardly of any one on account of the inconsistencies and frailties of human nature. Day after day he came, and at last he told me how dearly he loved me, and how anxiously he sought for my love in return. Alas! it was his already! My aunt was extremely pleased; Mrs. Morton and her daughter were delighted; and Mrs. Martha declared that she had known from the first how the matter would end. Several happy months passed. I fondly believed that in Arthur Morton I had found all that my brightest anticipations had ever pictured; the reality, in short, of all the vivid imaginations with which, in my earlier days, I had in fancy invested the man to whom I should give my affections.

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"I cannot talk, even to you, Helen, of that brief period of happiness; the remembrance of its hours of delicious converse is too sacred for speech; and the dark cloud of grief which at last clouded those hours of joy is a theme too bitter to be dwelt upon. A few weeks—*only* a few weeks—did I continue to live in the blissful enjoyment of perfect confidence in the being whom I loved so devotedly. Deeply, fervently, and with my whole heart I loved; never dreaming but that I met with love equally devoted, and equally faithful, in return. After a time, I fancied that Arthur's deportment became gradually colder; certainly his visits were rather less frequent, but then, he always gave good reasons for his non-appearance, and I thought that, from excess of affection, I might have become fanciful. Alas! it was no fancy; very soon my aunt perceived a marked alteration in Arthur's conduct. His mother and sister were much annoyed, but all attempts to fathom this change were fruitless. Vainly I endeavoured to remember if perchance I had given ground of offence; and at last, when perfectly worn

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out by the agony of suspense, I took occasion to tell my beloved friend that I keenly felt the change in his conduct, and begged him to tell me its true cause. To my great grief, I could obtain no definite answer. At last, however, Arthur ceased to visit me at all; then he wrote to say that he was going on business to Coblentz, and during his absence his sister discovered the truth. It appeared that, fickle in his character, he had lost much by never continuing to apply for any length of time to any one study; this unhappy failing ran through his course of action in manhood, as it had done in boyhood. He had frequently imagined that he loved women with whom he had been brought into contact, but he never had before gone so far as to make a decided declaration. Mr. and Miss Morton could not suppose that he would dishonourably withdraw his addresses; and they felt delighted at the prospect of an honourable engagement, hoping and believing that Arthur's roving fancy had indeed become firmly fixed. I will not prolong this tale, Helen.

"At the time when I first noticed the

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coolness of which I have spoken, Arthur had recently met with a beautiful young Scotch lady, who was introduced to him by her brother. Miss Macpherson was really very lovely, and highly accomplished. He admired her, fancied that he loved her, and ultimately married her. Now, Helen, I have done with this subject for ever; let us never recur to it again. The shock at the time was dreadful, for to trust fully, and be thoroughly deceived, is indeed a very bitter trial: nevertheless, I did not sink under it, as many persons supposed I should have done, and as some imagined I *ought* to have done. I had not much time to spend in fruitless broodings over my blighted hopes, for my poor aunt, about this time, became seriously ill; and I became so necessary to her comfort that for months I never left her, day or night.

"As soon as she could bear removal, we changed our quarters and went to Baden-Baden, where, as you know, your kind letter reached me. There my troubled heart regained something of tranquillity, and there, also, my dear aunt lingered on till death

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released her from her sufferings. I trust that I was enabled, before her departure, to unfold to her, in a clearer light than that in which she had been accustomed to regard it, the Gospel plan of salvation, as displayed in the Scriptures. Certainly there was a change, a striking change, in her views. The large prayer-book was not entirely laid aside, but the Bible took its place as the first book of devotion; and my poor aunt loved to hear Mrs. Martha and myself read page after page of its hallowed leaves, till, at length, she passed away from this sorrowful world, to enter, as I humbly trust, upon an eternity of everlasting joy.

"My aunt's death has left me possessed of a comfortable income, and I have you and Mr. Travers for dear friends, so that my earthly cup is still full of blessings; and in the exercise of the duties of life, and in the faithful performance of the task that God shall appoint me in His vineyard, I look forward to passing the remainder of my earthly sojourn in peace, and in calm happiness. And though the brilliance and the ecstatic joy that once seemed shed over

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my 'dream of life' has passed away never to return, there is no need to weep in despondency over the past. It was well—it was ordered right, my times were in His hands who doeth *all* things well; and He will yet shed joy and tranquillity over the heart which he has seen fit to crush to the very dust.

"And now, my Helen, you must make me useful. There is nothing so good for a spirit wounded as mine has been, as regular, energetic employment, not only action of the hands, but action of the mind. A path of duty ought to be marked out, and resolutely pursued, despite of all the soreness of feeling, and of the oft-recurring hours of depression, when memory fixes her pensive, tearful gaze on bright scenes gone for ever. You must have schools here, Helen, and poor people, so you will not be at a loss to employ me; and then there is your sweet little Grace, her young mind will be rapidly expanding, and though I am not an admirer of the forcing process, I would on no account leave the childish thoughts and ideas quite uncultured. The seedling requires regulation

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in its growth, quite as much as the budding plant."

I was silent for a moment. I was, in fact, considering what would have been my case, had Herbert acted the cruel part of Arthur Morton. That Emily had suffered deeply was evident to the most careless beholder, and yet she sat before me with placid brow, and words not of sentimental resignation, but of cheerful submission flowing from the heart. Then, as to finding her occupation in my schools, that was out of the question, for they were of necessity Roman Catholic. But there were schools belonging to the parish church, and plenty of cottages professing the Protestant faith; so I knew that Emily would not be at a loss to find that employment which she so earnestly desired. She seemed surprised at my silence, but while I was regretting that I had not by letter told her of the change in our opinions, little Rose awoke, and put an end to our conversation; and before I could resign her to the nursemaid, my husband had returned from his ride. After dinner, Herbert introduced the subject, and in a very short

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time made Emily understand that we were both professed members of the Church of Rome. Poor Emily! I saw the tears steal into her dark, mournful eyes; but she said little then. Herbert ended by saying, "And now, dear Miss Leicester, that you know exactly how matters stand, I trust you will continue to love my Helen as of yore; you must not condemn us, we have acted conscientiously."

As Herbert said this, a thrill ran through my whole frame. He *was* blinded, deluded, and misguided; but I—I had endeavoured to *force* myself into the belief of a false faith. My love for *him* had conquered my love for truth, and I felt at that moment, as I sat at the head of my table, surrounded by all the appendages of affluence and refinement, that I was, in the sight of God, a guilty, wilful apostate; and that when the great day of judgment should arrive, and the secrets of all hearts be disclosed, I should stand in the sight of my fellow-men, as a debased creature who had bartered conscience; who, to use the words of a modern poetess, had "bartered God's love for man's."

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Emily replied that she was deeply grieved to find her friend, her earliest friend, the professor of a false faith; and in a few words she stated her objections, as grounded on Scripture, to Romanism; but as to anything like a change of affection, the very idea pained her, and she begged that it might not again be suggested.

I feared that Emily would not remain with us; but she did, and I afterwards learned that her love for me was not the sole reason of her doing so, but also a hope that in some hour of sorrow or sickness, some word of truth might, by the blessing of God, find its way to the hearts of those whom she loved so dearly. She said little in the way of controversy, never entering into argument unless her own doctrines were attacked, and then she never failed, at least to my mind, to make good her ground of defence. But she went on from day to day, silently and calmly pursuing her Christian course, and displaying a beautiful example of Christian consistency.

My husband soon learned to love her as a sister; and Lady Baynton, who wrote to us

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frequently, complained that Emily had entirely taken her position with regard to Herbert.

And so time sped on. My little ones grew, and became, even to impartial eyes, very lovely children; my beloved husband became each day dearer to my heart; and Emily dwelt with us, shedding an influence around her like the soft rays of a summer sunbeam. Never gay, far less frivolous, but always placid and cheerful, it seemed to me that the sorrows of earthly existence had no longer any power over her soul. I was wrong, the remembrance of him who had blighted her bright young hopes still cast a shade over her fairest joys; but from the only true source of comfort and strength Emily Leicester drew her daily supplies; and, endued with power from on high, she sank not in the struggle, but, thanking God for the blessings of creation and redemption, went on her way rejoicing.

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CHAPTER X.

"A fearful thing that love and death may dwell
In the same world! She faded on—and I,
Blind to the last, there needed death to tell
My trusting soul that she could fade and die;
Yet, ere she parted, I had mark'd a change;
But it breathed hope—'twas beautiful, though strange,
Something of gladness in the melody
Of her low voice, and in her words a flight
Of airy thought—alas! too perilously bright."

FELICIA HEMANS.

EMILY had not been long with us before Mr. St. John Villiers came to pay us a visit. He had come to England on some private embassy, and having thrown aside the Franciscan garb, he looked very much like the Mr. Villiers of olden days. I had hopes, strong hopes, that he might influence Emily, but his efforts were unavailing, the only fruit of the monk's exhortations being a weariness on the part of his auditor—not mere listlessness of frame, but very fatigue of mind and

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spirit—and at last I feared lest she might become so annoyed at his incessant importunities, as to quit Abergwych, so I begged him to desist, at least for a time. Soon, however, the day came for his departure, and he left us for the busy scenes of the metropolis.

Summer dawned in all her glorious beauties, and we were preparing to visit Merelands, when a letter reached us from Sir Thomas, in which he spoke of the indisposition of his wife, and mentioned their joint wish to spend a few months with us. Of course we were delighted at the idea of receiving under our roof our kind and dear relations; but Herbert, on reading over a long catalogue of Laura's symptoms as detailed by the anxious husband, shook his head ominously, and as he closed the letter, and laid it in my writing-case, a tear stole into his eye, while he said mournfully, "So perished my beautiful young sister Katherine, and my brothers Walter and Charles. I had hoped since Laura continued year after year to escape, that she, my only remaining sister, might be spared to us; but now effort will

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be fruitless—Laura will not see another spring."

"Herbert, dearest," said I, "why do you entertain these fears? I have heard you speak of Katherine's and your brothers' deaths, but you never spoke of any particular malady as having been the cause of their premature decease; and Laura's present illness seems to me to resemble a general relaxation of the nervous system, caused probably by the sudden warmth of the season."

Herbert was silent for a minute, and then he said, "My mother died of consumption, and I fear all her children inherit her constitution, save, indeed, myself, who am certainly strong enough to keep black Lent, and be none the worse for it on Easter-day. A very peculiar character marks the species of consumption which prevails in our family. Painless and noiseless, among us, are the ravages of the destroyer. The disease reminds me of fires which are kindled from pure spirit and fragrant oils, and which burn the more intensely at the last, till suddenly, their source of nourishment being exhausted, they sink into total darkness. But, Helen

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my love, write immediately to Merelands, and let our friends know that we are anxiously hoping to see them on the earliest day which may suit their convenience."

It was June when our visitors arrived. In that lovely month, on the evening of a sultry day, we welcomed Laura and her husband to Abergwych. To my mind, little seemed amiss with my sister-in-law, for I knew nothing of the fatal disease which had already laid the beautiful Katherine and her brothers in an early grave. Laura's spirits were high, almost to wildness; her dark brilliant eyes sometimes flashed with what seemed an all but supernatural radiance; the soft crimson flush on her cheek glowed ruby-like as the sunset clouds on the mountains, and her step appeared lighter and fleeter than when I had seen her in robust health, climbing the rugged heights of her native hills.

Herbert said but little, but that little showed that his worst fears were confirmed. I endeavoured to think that both he and Sir Thomas were fanciful, and I rose the next morning with the firm intention of

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watching the invalid very closely, and proving to them, in the course of a few days, that their terrors were altogether groundless. I did watch Laura, even as I watched my own little ones; and as I gazed upon her lovely countenance, and heard the dear rich tones of her voice as she sang to her Spanish guitar, I felt every shadow of uneasiness and mistrust pass away, like mists before the summer morning sun. Still, as I remembered afterwards, when Laura lay before me, with those shining eyes closed in the still sleep of death, I did at times mark an alteration in her look and manner. There was a dreamy sadness in her gaze, and then a light gladness, beautiful to behold; she sang by fits of impulse, sometimes merry lays and ballads of bygone days, and sometimes mournful melodies, telling of the grave and of the long departed; then her voice would be alternately clear, high, and triumphant, and low and tremulous. Poor Laura! through the whole of that bright summer she continued thus.

All of us, her husband included, kept silence before her as to her precarious state.

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We had no idea that she had any thought of dying, till, one morning, while I was sitting with her in the breakfast-room, she spoke herself of the great change which she felt was about to take place. We were alone; Laura had been walking in the flower-garden, and she came in, bringing with her a large basket full of the finest flowers. She placed the basket upon the table, and throwing herself on a couch near the window, nearly fainted with fatigue. A glass of water restored her, and as she began to arrange the flowers I observed that the hand which she held uplifted between myself and the sunbeam was so transparent that it appeared more like a spiritual vision than the hand of a mortal being. She held a bunch of glowing verbenas in full flower, and after placing and replacing them several times, in order to contrast them with some sprays of white jasmine, she laid them in her lap, and turning to me, said, abruptly—

"Just so my sister employed herself only a few mornings before her death. I remember well her gathering her apron full of roses, carnations, verbenas, and every other brilliant

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child of sunny July, and arranging them in lovely groups; ere those sweet smiling blossoms had faded, Katherine, a brighter and lovelier bud than any of them, had faded too. Over her young head had passed the blight; silently she drooped, fair and sparkling to the very last; and—I know, Helen, that I too am dying."

As she spoke, Emily Leicester entered the room, and this sentence, which fell upon her ear as she stood just within the doorway, for a moment transfixed her there. Emily, like myself, had noted every look and movement of poor Laura, and though she felt considerably more alarmed than I, she had never for a moment entertained the idea that dissolution was so near at hand. When, however, Lady Baynton spoke, the whole truth passed before her mind, and she came towards Laura, and seated herself on a footstool by the sofa, the tears stealing gently into her dark, quiet eyes, as she gazed on the beautiful being before her, dying in all the radiance of her loveliness. There was a short stillness, and then Laura spoke again.

"Yes, Helen! I have known this for some

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weeks past. I dare not speak of it to Sir Thomas, but he must know it ere long; nay, I believe he suspects it, for he has watched over me very tenderly ever since the commencement of spring. I have suffered but little pain; till within the last ten days, none; but my strength has been gradually passing away; and like Jean in the Scotch ballad, 'I'm wearing awa' like a snaw-wreath.' Oh, it is sad to think of leaving this glorious world; my dear affectionate husband, my beloved home, my own Westmoreland, with its hoary hills, its placid lakes, and its 'blue, rejoicing streams.' Then the dark, awful, unknown, and mysterious future, the untried pathway, whence never yet mortal foot hath returned: all this has come before me in the silent watches of the night, and I feel as though I sailed on a wild and stormy sea, in a frail and sinking bark, without pilot, or helm, or compass. Death is unknown and fearful, and none can tell us how it has been with them in that solemn hour."

Emily took within her own the thin white hand, which had loosened its hold of the gay flowers, and said earnestly, "Dear Lady

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Baynton, there is One who has trodden the portals of the grave, and who has returned to cheer and lighten the last stage of that journey of life through which His children travel. He trod the path of mortality, from the cradle to the grave; He knows all the sorrows and temptations of His beloved ones, and even death itself He encountered, suffering all the bitterest anguish of dissolution, and laying His wearied and tortured frame in the silence of the tomb; and all for us, that we might in like extremities remember that Jesus, our Forerunner, has gone before us, even to the dreaded grave."

Laura gazed earnestly on Emily, and replied, "I know all this, Miss Leicester, I know it well; but there is one thing you have not considered. I, as a Roman Catholic, believe in the doctrine of purgatory. How long or how short that intermediate state may be, I know not; and is it not fearful to one, guilty and helpless as I am, to look forward to that 'unknown dark'?"

"Lady Baynton," said Emily, "forgive me if I speak with apparent rudeness, and you too, Helen; but this is no time to

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choose smooth phrases and guarded modes of expression. Lady Baynton, you must *not* believe in that doctrine of purgatory. It cannot be proved from Scripture. Is it not written, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from ALL sin?' What need, then, of the fires of purgatory? The Saviour, the Redeemer, the God-man himself, died for you; *that* free, full sacrifice was *perfect*, and ALL-SUFFICIENT. Once he was offered, His blood was shed for the remission of sins; and all who trust in Him shall certainly find peace to their souls and everlasting salvation. Do you not remember the thief on the cross? *He* trusted in that precious blood which even then flowed forth, a fountain which nothing can exhaust, which ages on ages cannot divert from its course; a life-giving spring full of hope and joy, and a sure and glorious immortality. The poor sinner, in his hour of agony and dissolution, turned to His dying Lord, saying, 'Lord, remember me:' and Jesus did remember him: 'THIS DAY,' He said, 'thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' THIS DAY, not months or years hence, when purgatorial fires and sufferings

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should have cleansed the thief's guilt completely away. It is dishonour to our blessed Lord, shameful dishonour to His blood and sacrifice, to attribute to aught else the power of washing away sin. It is virtually saying, that that precious blood cannot do ALL; that it may do some part, *much* perhaps; but still, that means of greater efficacy must be employed, before the sinner can enter heaven."

"That is the doctrine of the Church of England, I know," answered Laura; "once I worshipped within her pale, but it seemed to me that the Romish Church was the true Church."

"Think not now of churches or sects," replied Emily, with earnestness; "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; in Him ALONE; in Him fully; in Him, with childlike belief and simplicity, and then it matters not to what outward sect you may be said to belong. Such belief, such faith, is the belief and the faith of the Church of Christ—a church which is scattered now, and partially separated; its members being of different lands, feelings, habits, and forms; but in this one

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point, *free* FULL salvation by Christ Jesus and by NONE OTHER, they entirely agree. This is the Scriptural Church, the only pure and elect Church of God."

"Do you think," I asked, "that no Roman Catholics can belong to this Church?"

"Far from me be it to say so," answered Emily. "There are, I doubt not, thousands of *so-called* Roman Catholics, who, *at heart*, cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and rest their hope of eternal life on Jesus Christ and Him crucified alone. They have been from infancy accustomed to the yoke; submission to the rules and doctrines of their Church has grown with them, they have drunk in Roman Catholic prejudices, and false constructions of Scripture, like their daily nourishment; yet they have felt after the Saviour in the darkness, and have found Him, and laid hold upon Him. But you, Lady Baynton, and you, my Helen," continued Emily, very sadly, "you have had the pure lamp of the Word of God to light your heavenly path, and fain would I see you turn from a system which the Bible

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teaches to be a fatal system of delusions. You have not the prejudices of youth to cope with; you, Helen, have known Protestantism in its purest and most scriptural form. No mere forms, no lifeless devotions, no careless pastor, have you encountered, to lead you astray. Helen, dearest, forgive me; but I sometimes think your inmost soul still clings to the simple and blessed truths of your early years; would that you might return, both you and your dear husband, before the storm comes; for if you be not induced to return by gentle means, a kind and loving Father will use sterner methods, and a storm *will* arise—one that may so desolate your way, that, like the dove of Noah, you may find no resting-place for the sole of your foot, and may so return to the ark of safety."

Surely those words of Emily's were warnings; a year afterwards, Herbert and I pondered on them, as unfulfilled prophecies; but at the time, though saddened at heart, and feeling but too well that she spoke stern truth, I would not own it, even to myself; and so I said—

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"Then, by returning to the ARK, you mean returning to the communion of the Church of England?"

"No! you misunderstand me entirely," was Emily's answer. "I do not confine salvation to any outward Church. I love and honour the Church of England, I feel that she possesses a thousand blessed privileges. I hold the doctrines which I, as a member of the English Church, profess to be scriptural. Still, the Church of England *has* her faults, she lays no claim to infallibility, but, as the purest and most scriptural branch of the Church of Christ, I cling to her, as a child to a venerable mother."

"But why," I asked, "do you so reject all Catholicism? Do you not derive this Liturgy, which you prize so much, from us? Are not the rites and ceremonies which you so much applaud taken from us?"

"We do not reject every principle of the Church of Rome," answered Emily, gently; "there is still much of precious truth in her doctrines. The Church of Rome was once pure, and beloved of apostles, martyrs, and holy men; but centuries passed, and

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errors crept in, secular authority (tempting enough, I allow) offered herself as a bait, then the Word of God became corrupted by the admixture of human traditions, and so, from age to age, the once pure Church of Rome more and more varied from the truth, until at last the precious remnant of Gospel seed lay so hidden amid the rubbish of human inventions, that it could scarcely be discerned. A few men, however, of blessed memory, remained, who had not bowed the knee to Baal; a seed to serve the Lord in His own spiritual way had never failed, and at last these men waxed mighty, and amid much persecution and suffering succeeded in planting a standard of truth, which still waves its banners victoriously over the turmoils of the world; and its motto is *Jehovah-nissi.* The Romish Church, in her polluted state, still retained somewhat of the pure doctrines of Christianity, and some of the remains of the forms of apostolic simplicity—these, the Reformers and the Reformed Churches did not reject. They tried every doctrine by the rule of Scripture, and what agreed not thereunto they cast away

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as unprofitable or dangerous, retaining only that whose basis is firmly founded on the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Sir Thomas, and he, remarking his wife's excitement and succeeding exhaustion, naturally inquired the cause. Being told the reason he begged that the subject might not be renewed. It never was renewed, for he never left her again. Emily tried thrice to speak of the way of salvation, but Sir Thomas always discouraged her, and within a fortnight, Laura Baynton was no more. She drooped rapidly at last. A few days after the conversation just narrated, she became unable even to come into the drawing-room; and one bright morning, while the sun shone brilliantly on the red and white roses which shadowed the casement, and the purple mists were melting from the hills, the spirit of poor Laura departed. No one suspected that the parting hour was nigh; she had been partially dressed and laid on the sofa, and while her husband bent over her, the final change took place; the rich flush of the cheek came once

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more, and then left her for ever; the shining eyes gave their last sparkle of fond affection, and closed to open no more on this side of the grave. According to her dying wish, Laura's remains were conveyed to Ambleside, and there interred by the side of her parents, her sister, and her brothers. I trust that in that parting struggle, she clung to the one hope of sinners pointed out by Emily; but I know not. Laura's death was the beginning of sorrows.

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CHAPTER XI.

"So pass'd we on, like earth's first exiles, turning
Fond looks, where hung the sword above their Eden burning."

FELICIA HEMANS.

I DID not accompany my husband and brother-in-law into Westmoreland, upon the sad occasion of poor Laura's funeral. My little girls were both indisposed, and Emily and I remained with them at Abergwych Hall, till the commencement of the autumn, when we took them for a few weeks to Beaumaris, hoping that change of air might restore the roses to their cheeks. We returned to Abergwych in September, at which time Herbert left Merelands, where he had been staying in the hope of administering comfort to the bereaved husband. The indisposition of the children ultimately assumed the character of measles; and for several weeks both Emily and myself were

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fully occupied in nursing the dear little invalids. Grace soon recovered, but Rosa, after the disease had passed away, grew weaker every day: and though every care was employed that affection could devise, she did but languish on till late in October, and then her infant spirit departed to a brighter world.

Laura's death had been a sore trial, but infinitely more bitter was this bereavement. A mother's anguish and desolation under such circumstances are deep indeed, and for some hours after my baby's death, as I looked upon the small, beautiful features, composed in that last long sleep, so cold, so white, so angelically pure, I felt that the foretold tempest was rising, and that the first blast had laid low one of my loveliest and dearest treasures.

The winter which followed was very desolate. Wild storms of wind and rain, and heavy falls of snow, soon shrouded all the remaining beauty of the waning autumn; and on my own heart, too, there lay a heavy cloud, or rather, I should say, *many* clouds; for something within me seemed to whisper

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that evil days were at hand. I remembered Laura, and her want of peace in the prospect of death; and my thoughts often flew back to the little church at Brindsley, and to the quiet holy Sabbaths spent beneath the roof of my excellent preceptress. Outwardly a staunch Papist, I inwardly feared and trembled exceedingly in spirit, lest the faith which I professed should prove as false as its opponents declared it to be.

But spring returned; a late, cold spring, certainly, but still it *was* spring; and the very bursting of the green leaves contributed to lighten the load of sadness which oppressed me. Herbert had never seemed very cheerful since the loss of his idolised little daughter, but now his depression evidently increased, and at length it became such as to cause me serious anxiety. At times his spirits rose unnaturally high, and he would give way to hilarity almost approaching to levity, yet this joyous bearing was obviously so forced, that the most inexperienced eye would at once have discerned it to be but an attempt at gaiety. Then again came seasons of gloom, when he would sit

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alone from morning till night in his study, and twice he took sudden journeys to London, without giving me any definite reason for so doing; and both times returned in a more melancholy mood than before.

Early, however, in April, I became once more a mother, and fondly I hoped that the new little one might supply the place of her whom, with so many tears, we laid in the grave. My child was a boy, the long-wished-for son and heir; and the tenantry rejoiced, and the village bells were rung, and a bonfire was made in the park to celebrate the auspicious event. Alas! but a few hours had elapsed, when this joy was turned into sorrow. The infant was not, as his little sisters had been, strong and healthy, and before a night and a day had elapsed, his frail life was gone. Then there was mourning in the old Hall of Abergwych, and even the peasantry wept, when they heard that the young heir of the Travers' family must sleep in his ancestral vault, instead of resting on his mother's bosom.

My recovery was slow and tedious, for most bitterly did I grieve over my blighted

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hopes; and summer had come again with her beauty, before I was able to walk abroad.

During my illness, Herbert had spent much time with me, and the too evident air of constrained cheerfulness which marked his demeanour, had tended not a little, by giving rise to all kinds of fears and anxieties, to retard my recovery. It was not till that he deemed me strong enough to bear excitement, that I knew the truth. He then told me by degrees, first, that in the rage for speculation, which was even then beginning to arise, he had been induced to risk a large sum of money, all of which was lost. This, however, seemed but a small trouble—our mode of life being so retired, that I knew it to be impossible for us to spend more than half our income; and I told Herbert that a year or two would replace the money, and that as we still had no son, and only one child for whom to make provision, there was no need for anxiety. But soon Herbert explained himself further; and by degrees he unfolded all that had appeared so mysterious through the winter.

Vexed at his failure he had ventured to

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speculate once more, and again had been unsuccessful. The affair now became so disastrous, that he was seriously involved; so much so, that he consulted his legal adviser, a relation of Mr. St. John Villiers, and the same who had drawn out our marriage-settlements. Mr. Dixon, the attorney in question, was a staunch Roman Catholic, and much recommended by Mr. St. John Villiers. Herbert, who was about as expert in business matters as myself, trusted him implicitly. He had made this man his agent; in short, he had confided everything to him, and therefore to him he now turned in difficulty. Mr. Dixon pondered the matter, and then told his client that things might easily be arranged, but that a temporary mortgage would be necessary, merely a *pro-tempore* affair, which might be paid off with full interest in half-a-dozen years, or probably in half that time. My poor husband listened to the tempter. Certain lands were accordingly mortgaged, and this, to poor Herbert's infinite concern, produced an expensive lawsuit with some of his distant relations.

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We lost our cause, and Mr. Dixon came forward with a new proposition. A fresh speculation had been set on foot, which *must* eventually pay cent. per cent. (so said the attorney), and Herbert had but to purchase a sufficient number of shares to insure to himself the return of all which was lost. Many will say that Mr. Travers must have been easily duped, and not very sharp-witted, thus to allow this man to guide him against all sober judgment; but let it be remembered that, till within a few months of our marriage, Herbert had given his whole attention to the preparing of himself for holy orders; and that, though endowed with a mind of a high order, he was, when it came to plain money matters, a mere child. Moreover, being himself the very soul of truth and integrity, he never dreamed of such a thing as *fraud* on the part of those whom he had been led to trust, and Mr. Dixon being recommended to his notice by his bosom friend Villiers, he placed entire reliance upon his judgment and good faith. Miserably was he deceived.

Week after week Herbert became more deeply involved; and at length, a few weeks

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after the birth of our little son, the bubble burst; the promised land disappeared, like the visionary towers and waters of a mirage; and, worst of all, Dixon himself was missing. Herbert roused himself at once. He went immediately to London, tried every possible method to save his sinking fortunes, but unavailingly; and, before he could collect his scattered ideas, other and more powerful adversaries appeared upon the scene. These new foes were some relatives of Herbert; the same who had contested with him the affair of the mortgage, and who had manifested towards him an inveterate enmity ever since he had joined the communion of the Church of Rome.

These relations were persons of that class who seem to believe that the further they depart, not only from Romanism, but from all Church government, the nearer they approach to heaven. They held little intercourse with us; and whenever we came in contact, they seemed to imagine it to be their bounden duty to annoy Herbert as much as possible. When the mortgage question was mooted, many family papers

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and old deeds were of necessity consulted by their legal advisers.

Abergwych had not been inherited in a direct line, and there was some flaw, and a terrible flaw, too, in the will of Herbert's grand-uncle. Of course this was discovered; a new lawsuit, "Travers *versus* Travers," was instituted; and after a keenly contested trial, our opponents were again the victors, and Abergwych Hall was no longer our own. Every farthing of our property was gone too; and the victorious Travers threatened a third suit for the recovery of the enormous rents received. My own little fortune, hitherto accounted as mere pin-money, now seemed our only resource; but, to our infinite horror, that too was swallowed up; for the settlements drawn up by Dixon were so imperfect as to be in fact of no more value than waste paper. There was abundant evidence of an intention on his part to cheat and deceive; but whatever might have been his motives, it was useless to attempt to trace them.

All was lost; the wreck of our worldly goods was total, and Herbert, myself, and

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our dear little Grace, were homeless and nearly penniless. At this juncture Emily came forward, and begged us to share her small fortune; it was sufficient to procure for us all the bare necessaries of life, but no more. Oh, in that hour of bitterness, how sweetly, how gently, did she console us! Friends seemed all to have deserted us. Sir Thomas Baynton was in Greece, where, we knew not exactly, and Merelands was let for three years to an Irish nobleman. Whither were we to turn our steps? We had notice to leave Abergwych Hall, and now that we felt ourselves to be lingering on the property of another, we all agreed that, painful as was the thought of quitting our home, we had better leave it at once, and without further delay. Herbert was seriously unwell, I was occupied in nursing him, and in attending to Grace, who had of late become very delicate; and under these circumstances, all energetic measures fell upon Emily. It was she who came to Rockenthwaite (for my heart yearned after Westmoreland) and secured for us a pretty, but a very humble little cottage. It was

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she who, after the dismissal of my maid, packed with her own hands the few moveables which we intended to carry along with us, and also our wardrobes; and, more than all, it was she who sustained my drooping spirit by the tenderest affection and care.

It has been said that poverty drives away love. Not so! not so! Mere passion or fancy will certainly disappear before the iron hand of penury; but true, holy love, *cannot* be annihilated. To love once, truly, from the heart unselfishly and self-sacrificingly, is to love till death; and I firmly believe that *such* love dies not with the mortal breath; it is transplanted to a holier region, to the soil whence it derived its birth (for love *is* of heaven—a relic of Eden, a spark of man's once holy and spotless nature), and there, purified from aught of earthly taint, it shall bloom throughout eternity. I can bear witness that true love is unchangeable; for both Herbert and Emily, in that day of calamity, became if possible still more gentle, more affectionate, and more considerate, than they had been in prosperous times; the ties of domestic affection were

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drawn closer and closer; so that amid this deluge of calamity, this fearful storm which shrouded all the fair future of our life, we were blest with

"The only bliss that has survived the fall;"

and we felt, that if death made no further inroads on our little circle, we might yet be happy.

At last the day came for leaving Abergwych. The season was autumn, in all its richest, ripest loveliness, and never had the old park, the thick woods, and the clear streams, looked so peaceful and so lovely. Emily had already gone. She was to arrange everything for our comfort at Rockenthwaite; to engage the single servant our finances permitted us to hire; and, finally, she was to welcome us at Rockenthwaite, and introduce us to our new home. Herbert, and I, and Grace, stood together in the drawing-room, ready equipped for our long, sad journey. We looked around on the many familiar and valued objects which had so often contributed to our comfort; we gazed from the window on the sunny lawn,

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still radiant with beautiful flowers, and we felt that if we were, indeed, quitting our Paradise, like the first exiles, we went forth *together*. We were not separated. Herbert, and I, and our child were together; and in comparison with the loss of each other, the loss of earthly wealth seemed small.

To leave the grave of our little Rose, was among the bitterest of my trials. There in the little chapel she reposed with her infant brother, and the home of her parents was left to strangers.

At length the carriage drove up; arm-in-arm, Herbert and I descended the wide staircase, and crossed the hall for the last time. The grey old butler, who had served the family for two generations, carried Grace and placed her in the carriage, and as he did so, he laid his hand on the child's fair head and blessed her, weeping bitterly all the while. All the servants, who yet remained, were in tears, and more than one half-uttered execration on our successors met our ears. A look, an almost imploring look from Herbert, silenced them, and then

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came a general shaking of hands. At length, unable to bear more, Herbert rushed to the carriage, dragging me, or rather half carrying me, along with him. And so we left for ever the home which we had loved so well.

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CHAPTER XII.

"And is this weight of anguish which they bind
On life, this searing to the quick of mind,
That but to God its own free path would crave;
This crushing out of hope, and love, and youth,
Thy will indeed? Give light! that I may know the truth."

FELICIA HEMANS.

ABERGWYCH was soon lost to my tearful gaze, and then I turned my attention to Herbert, for the thought occurred, that I was acting rather selfishly in allowing him to witness the gloom which the quitting of our beloved home had cast over me.

He was extremely pale, and looked very mournful; but there was a calmness in his dark, sorrowful eye, which almost astonished me. The day wore on, and late in the evening we reached Lancaster, where we purposed remaining for the night. Insensibly

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my spirits revived as we advanced northwards; many bright flowers, which in the milder climates had long ceased to bloom, yet shed their brightness over the gorgeous beauty of a north country autumn; and in like manner, many sweet feelings, which had apparently lain dormant during the long weary months of anxiety, suspense, and difficulty, now revived with tenfold vigour, and gladdened the path of worldly sorrow which it was my lot to tread. Herbert and my darling Grace were still mine; and though we were leaving for ever a beloved home, we were still all in all to each other, each loving each far more dearly than in the first cloudless days of our married life.

On the evening of the second day, we reached Rockenthwaite. The last few miles of our journey had led us through a wild mountainous region, and our route had been rather circuitous; now, however, we came into a more luxuriant and cultivated country, and as the last rays of the setting sun poured their golden glory on the shining bay of Morecambe, with its waste of sands, we reached the entrance of the lane

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in which our humble habitation was situated.

It was a large and roomy cottage, placed in the midst of a very large garden, behind which was a beautiful orchard, and then, in solemn majesty, rose up the dark, silent hills, beneath the solemn gray of the evening sky. Hills, or fells, as they are called in the north, lay around us, northward and eastward, and though far apart, and all at some miles' distance, the magnificent mist-clad summits of Helvellyn, Coniston Old-Man, and the stern Langdale Pikes, towered high in the clear, still atmosphere. Rather to the west was spread a luxuriant valley, watered by the Winster; to the south flowed the river Ken; and beyond that lay the waves and sands of Morecambe Bay, bordered by the woods of Silverdale and Arnside. The descending sun cast a clear, soft, and chastened light over the landscape, so that it lay before me in its beauty, like the most exquisitely finished picture.

The loveliness of the scene added, in no small degree, to the comfort which, during the day, I had been diligently hoarding up;

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for I knew that Herbert loved Nature even to enthusiasm ; and I knew that the solemn hills, and the far-off darkening sea, and the still waves of the little lake, washing gently the borders of the dark wood which surrounded it, all ministered calm and peace to his long-harassed spirit. Grace had fallen asleep, and her father had wrapped her in a large cloak, and held her thus enveloped in his arms. On turning towards him, I perceived that his dark eyes were fixed with a sweet, fond expression on the innocent face of his lovely child. The lines which care had lately traced on his pale forehead seemed to have passed away, and when he caught my gaze he took my hand and said—

"Never fear, my Helen, we shall be very happy here. I shall have no more trouble and anxiety ; we will be content with a cottage and its humble appointments, and I shall be chaplain, gardener, fisherman, student, and lord and master besides. We have each other, this precious budding treasure; a beloved and faithful friend in Miss Leicester, and this beautiful country wherein to dwell. Poverty, undeniably, curtails one's luxuries

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and outward means of enjoyment, but in this case it is powerless, it cannot take from us the thrilling happiness of gazing on the solemn grandeur of these towering hills, or the rich verdure of the woods, where streams, and birds, and shade, and flowers, dwell together, mingling their beauties in one harmonious and indescribably lovely whole."

He paused, as if feeling that Nature is never properly appreciated, until she excites strong, rushing feelings in the heart of man, which, from the sheer inadequacy of mortal language to speak that which pertains to immortality, he never can communicate to any one. The fervent emotions of the soul, raised and agitated by the development of God's own mightiness and infinite and stupendous wisdom, all speak of immortality; and besides, wild or lovely scenes have different effects on different minds. Some persons are excited by the proud waves of the sea, others are subdued by them, and there are times when friends who feel deeply, and generally in communion with each other, must each turn from his beloved

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associate, and hold converse alone with his "hermit spirit."

> "Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
> Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh."

Thus it was in the hour in which Herbert and I drew near to our future home. He, who commonly had no thought or feeling which he would not share with his wife, felt then the utter impossibility of expressing the fulness of ideas which came thronging upon his soul; and in silence, each one gazing upon the dark outlines of the distant mountains and the dying radiance of daylight, we arrived at the little gate which led to our lowly domain.

Emily came instantly from the house, on hearing the sound of carriage-wheels. There were sunny smiles of welcome on her generally serious countenance, and her whole face beamed with joy, when she saw that neither Herbert nor myself wore the look of deep depression which had shaded our brows at the time of her departure from Abergwych Hall.

"All is delightful here," she exclaimed,

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as with Grace in her arms she hurried us into the house; and truly the parlour into which she led us did look delightful: for a bright fire blazed on the hearth; the tea equipage stood invitingly on the table; and an odoriferous aroma of coffee, with other fragrant odours, speedily invited us to refreshment; and to say the truth, the breath of violets and lilies of the valley would not have been, just then, half so satisfactory to the cold and fatigued travellers. Presently lights were brought, and coats and cloaks laid aside; and Emily sat down to preside, all the while telling us of the advantages of Rockenthwaite, and especially of those of our own particular estate.

The trees were still laden with winter apples; the garden was literally teeming with a superabundance of vegetables; there was an excellent south corner just fitted for an apiary; and the water was deliciously clear and cold.

All these, and a hundred matters beside, Emily descanted upon, while she poured out the tea, and dispensed, ham, eggs, jam, and honey, with a lavish hand; promising,

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however, to be somewhat less extravagant in future. Finally, she undressed Grace, and laid her in a neat little bed beside her own; and the child, delighted to have dear Aunt Emily (for so we had taught her to call Emily) for her sole attendant, declared that she liked the little rooms and the funny chairs a great deal better than the great nursery at home, with finer things in it.

That night I was too much fatigued to inspect any part of my new house, and at an early hour I retired to my apartment, where I found everything disposed for my evening toilette as carefully as though my waiting maid had rendered her accustomed services. Of course it was Emily who had done all this—and the tears rose warmly and thickly in my eyes as I thought of her devoted love, and sweet, quiet consideration for our comfort; nevertheless, I determined that the next day I would lay aside all exterior honours and self-indulgent habits, and take my share in the new duties which must inevitably await the head of so humble a household.

It was very long that night ere Herbert

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betook himself to rest. I heard the voices of himself and Emily conversing in the parlour below, till, lulled by the hum of their undistinguished words, and the faint murmur of a neighbouring stream, I fell asleep. I had slept, as I fancied, for about an hour, when I was aroused by a light in the chamber. I raised my head, but no one was visible; at length, however, I heard Herbert's suppressed voice in earnest prayer, as he knelt in the most distant part of the room. I did not wish to rouse myself, and I was again composing myself to sleep, when one fervent supplication reached my ear. It was a passage from the Litany of the Church of England, "From all false doctrine, good Lord deliver me;" and then followed these words, "Teach me *Thy* way; O Lord, give me light; cause me to know error from truth. Dark clouds surround my temporal and spiritual way; let Thy Spirit shine upon me, that I may know and worship Thee aright;" and then a burst of tears succeeded.

Herbert wavering! could it be? He, who had so long gone firmly and consistently on

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his way, could he be tottering, and doubting the firmness of the foundation on which he had built his faith? I wished to hear no more of what was evidently intended to be heard only by the Almighty; and I buried my head in my pillow, and strove to slumber again. I heard nothing further, but Herbert still remained in silent prayer, and after a time sleep again overcame me. In the morning, when I recalled the scene of the night, I was almost tempted to fancy that I had dreamed it; but I looked on Herbert, and the traces of tears were very evident on his countenance. I did not tell him what I had overheard; and he never referred to anything approaching to religious doubt, even in our most private converse.

Upon going over my new house, I found it to be a regular cottage home—a strange contrast to the wide halls and splendid chambers of Abergwych; but my husband, and my daughter, and Emily were there, to enliven it with their presence, and I felt little depression. Very near to us was the old moss-grown church of Rockenthwaite, surrounded by the graves of those who,

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centuries ago, had trodden the surrounding green hills and forests; and on one side of the church stood the vicarage, a low, rambling, and irregular whitewashed house, its walls completely covered with rose-trees, spreading woodbine, and clematis, while one gable and chimney was entirely clad with ivy, whose strong rope-like roots denoted its venerable age.

We were told that the pastor of Rockenthwaite was an aged man; a faithful under-shepherd of the flock committed to his trust; that the simple people who dwelt amidst the surrounding fells and vales looked up to him as to a common father; that they applied to him in difficulty, trusted him in emergency, and implicitly obeyed his directions in all things. It was not long before the excellent man visited us. It was impossible to gaze on the calm countenance, and white, silvery locks of old Mr. Grahame, without love and veneration. He, on his part, though he had heard that we were persons reduced by adverse circumstances to comparative poverty, was evidently unprepared to meet people in our station of life. It was long since he had

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associated with any one above the rank of those small landowners, who, in Westmoreland and the adjacent districts, and, indeed, throughout the border country, are called *statesmen;* still, there was a peculiar grace and dignity in the bearing of the old man; and a lofty patriachal simplicity, which would not have disgraced the most exalted birth. Of course he soon became aware that Herbert and myself were Roman Catholics; and he looked pained when he had ascertained that fact. For several minutes he seemed lost in thought, and then said—

"Dear friends, I fear you have not sufficiently studied God's own word in this matter, or you would not have been allowed to leave a comparatively pure church for one debased by divers and sundry superstitions. We cannot walk together in spiritual matters, yet let us be friends; we can talk to each other more anon; and it may hereafter be made clearly manifest whether you are in error, or whether the error be mine."

Now the rector of Abergwych had once made to my husband a similar proposal, which had been met by a decided, yet polite,

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negative, and I imagined that here, also, a refusal would be given. However, it was not so. Herbert did not exactly acquiesce in Mr. Grahame's evident desire to search into the foundations of our respective creeds; but he replied, that he should be most happy to see him under his roof at any time; and there was an earnestness and sincerity in his countenance as he said this, which could not fail to convey to his visitor an impression that something more than mere form or common courtesy was intended. In fact, we accepted an invitation to go that very evening to the vicarage, and drink tea with Miss Grahame, the most delightful elderly maiden lady I ever encountered.

In a few weeks we were comfortably settled at Rockenthwaite, and I should have little regretted the change in our residence, had I not imagined that Herbert was unwell from the too great bleakness of the climate during the winter months. Once, indeed, he showed such evident signs of illness, that I despatched my sole domestic to Kendal, soliciting an immediate visit from the medical man, whom people in general held in the highest repute.

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Herbert laughed at my fears, and the doctor told me that my husband was liable to severe colds, and that, consequently, he must be careful, but that I need not alarm myself. After this, I ceased to be uneasy; the days glided quietly on, unmarked by any event save the commencement of a new book (for we always read after tea); or the variations in the weather, from damp, misty days, to clear, bright frosty ones, or from a snow-covered world, to a tempest of wind and rain.

A pianoforte which had belonged to my dressing-room at Abergwych had been brought to Rockenthwaite, and when tired with reading, we used to amuse ourselves with music. Once, indeed, Emily and I went to Kendal, taking our domestic with us, leaving Herbert to the novel task of preparing his own and Grace's dinner, and returning in the evening with all kinds of treasures, from culinary necessaries up to new songs. And so the winter passed quietly away.

There *had* been a storm of sorrow; and another, still darker and more desolating, was already rising in the horizon; but between the two came a sweet season of calm

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and peace. Herbert and Mr. Grahame spent whole afternoons together; but when they joined us at the tea-table, the result of their conversations was not communicated to Emily and myself. I could not but observe that my husband became still more thoughtful than before; and I suspected that his mind was agitated by doubts as to the faith which he had adopted. Youthful enthusiasm had passed; the false teachers came not in his way; once he had heard and known the truth, and still it might be, that a distant echo of the true doctrine of the Gospel sounded faintly in his ears, and confounded the chaotic creed of Romanism. For myself, I had endeavoured to convince my own conscience that I was converted to the Romish belief; but no length of time ever elapsed without my feeling that herein I was a deceiver. I knew that at heart I was no Roman Catholic. Poor Herbert was sincere in his error. How much greater was my guilt than his!

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CHAPTER XIII.

"Now Thou art calling me in every gale,
Each sound and token of the dying day:
Thou leav'st me not, though earthly life grows pale,
I am not *darkly* sinking to decay;
But hour by hour my soul's dissolving shroud
Melts off to radiance as a silvery cloud.
I bless Thee, O my God!"

FELICIA HEMANS.

AT length the peaceful winter passed, and spring returned; the coldest, bleakest, and most unlovely spring I ever remember. Week after week the wind still blew from the north-east, gray mists veiled the sky and sunshine, and the mountains remained covered with perpetual snow. I longed for the return of warm weather; for Grace was very anxious to be in the green valleys, which she had as yet only seen and not visited; and, moreover, she had a vivid remembrance of gathering primroses and other wild flowers

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in the preceding spring. Herbert, too, began once more to make me seriously uneasy, his spirits were depressed, he complained of constant headaches, and his appetite entirely failed.

When spring *did* arrive, it burst upon us with an Icelandic rapidity, clothing, in a few days, the blighted-looking ground with a robe of emerald verdure. Emily took Grace with her to scramble on the fells, and to gather violets in the deep woods, and I walked every day with Herbert, trying in vain to chase away the gloom which so evidently hung about him. His health was now really very bad, and Mr. Grahame counselled him to consult an eminent physician then resident at Carlisle. We agreed to take the vicar's advice; accordingly, one fine morning, late in May, we set out for the ancient city in question. Herbert's cough was at this time better, and some other symptoms which had greatly alarmed me appeared to be alleviated.

The country was lovely. Hawthorn, laburnum, and lilac, mingled their delicate hues with the vivid green of the young

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foliage; brilliant warm sunlight slept on the hills, and from the rustling woods and shady forests rang out the thrilling music of rushing streams and of the song of birds. I was happier than I had been for some weeks past; Herbert smiled so brightly, that I almost forgot the shade which had so long clouded his brow, and when we reached Carlisle my mind was full of brilliant hopes and sweet anticipations. It was too late in the day to see Dr. ——, so, after engaging rooms at the principal hotel, we appointed an early hour of the next day for the important interview.

How well do I remember that sweet May evening! Herbert lay on the sofa, and I sat by him, talking of the bright summer months to come. I was persuaded that the doctor would order sea-bathing, and I was planning how we should, for a few months, leave Rockenthwaite and locate ourselves on the seashore. I remember well how we gazed upon the venerable cathedral, its walls ruddy in the red rays of the setting sun, and lamented that Herbert's weakness should prevent us from immediately sallying forth

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to explore both it and the ancient castle, and the flowing banks of the shining Eden. Little did I imagine that before twenty-four hours should have elapsed woods, streams, cathedrals, and castles would have lost all charm for me! Little did I think that ere another sunset should glow on the waves of the sweet river, I should turn away in sickness of heart from the glad beams in water and sky!

On the following morning, at half-past nine, Dr. —— paid his promised visit. He had received, the evening before, a letter from Mr. Grahame, whom he well knew, entreating him to show us every attention, and he spent nearly an hour in very minute examination of his patient's case; then, rising to depart, he glanced at me with an expression which indicated a wish for a private interview. I followed down stairs, and walked with him into the garden behind the hotel. When we were alone Dr. —— proposed that we should sit down in an arbour near us, as he had something to say about the treatment of his patient. The gravity of the doctor's countenance

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made me tremble. He seated himself, and said—

"I was not at all prepared to find Mr. Travers so ill; neither the note which I received from you, madam, nor the letter of my friend Grahame, led me to think him in any real danger."

Real danger! I did not speak the words, for my lips refused to utter them, but I gazed at the doctor with an undefinable sensation of agony and terror; he added, in a kind and evidently embarrassed tone—

"You must not let him breathe damp or cold air, it will increase his cough; you must not let him read or think too much, he must be amused and interested, but it must be with trifles, nothing to cause reflection. As to diet, let it be as light and nourishing as possible, but still, do not refuse him anything he may fancy. I will write a prescription immediately, and see it made up; it will diminish the cough, and alleviate the constant pain of which he complains."

"Alleviate!" I exclaimed, "the pain must be removed; can you give no medicine, can you order no regimen which will

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eradicate this complaint, whatever it may be?"

For a moment Dr. —— was silent, while I waited in intolerable suspense; at length he answered—

"My dear madam, it is my principle never to hide the truth from the friends of my patients. It is a most painful task to blight your fond hopes, yet it must be done. Mr. Travers' complaint is incurable consumption; a peculiar and painless species of decline, at least comparatively painless. Nothing can stay the progress of his disease; it remains only for his medical advisers to ameliorate his suffering, slight though it be; and for his spiritual friends to prepare his soul for the great change which awaits him ere the close of this present summer."

I did not faint, but I was stunned; and I remained for some time sitting in a state of stupefaction, with a sensation of intense mental pain, but entirely forgetful of its cause. I was roused to perception by Dr.——, who, taking my hand, said, compassionately—"My dear lady, if I have been too abrupt, forgive my bluntness; but

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remember that your husband must be told the truth very gradually: if it fall upon him without preparation, I could not answer for the result; the shock might bring on hemorrhage of the lungs, which would inevitably terminate his life in a few hours, if not instantly. I trust to your discretion and affection to break the intelligence gently."

In a few seconds Dr. —— was gone, and I hurried silently to my chamber, for I felt that I dare not trust myself in my husband's presence. I had no inclination to weep, but I longed to sit down in solitude, and see and hear human creatures no more. Soon, however, it became necessary that I should go to Herbert. I saw in the glass that my lips and cheeks were colourless, and having taken hastily a larger draught of wine than, perhaps, I had ever done before, I returned to my husband, and, with an appearance of composure, simply told him that Dr. —— had thought very seriously about his case, and had given me several directions as to diet, &c. At that time he seemed satisfied. Within an hour we were journeying back to Rockenthwaite; and it was not till Herbert

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was laid in his bed that he renewed the subject. He had taken some refreshment, and I was leaving the apartment, when he said—

"Helen, my love, come here. Dr. —— told you to-day that I should not recover. You know that I am dying, is it not so?"

I could not answer; and I remembered nothing more till I found Emily standing over me, and I felt her warm tears falling upon my face. The next morning Mr. Grahame came, and he saw Emily alone; he had received a letter from Dr. ——, saying that a few months, perhaps a few weeks, must close the life of his patient. Emily told me, afterwards, that the old man wept bitterly while she read the doctor's letter; and that he blamed himself most severely for not having made more decided attempts to convince him of the error of the Romish faith. Poor Herbert! he needed no convincing of error! In that hour when eternity came near to him, when he saw the end of his journey at hand, he knew, from his inmost soul, that he was an apostate from Scripture truth. Very deep and bitter were

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the humiliation and remorse which ensued. Mr. Grahame came, and vainly endeavoured to comfort the sorrowing spirit of his dying friend.

"I have sinned against the light," Herbert would reply; "I was not brought up in the delusions of that false Church; I was taught truth, and I rejected the counsels of God for the word of human beings like myself."

One day Mr. Grahame asked him what led him to join the ranks of Tractarianism. He answered,—"A self-righteous spirit; I admired the stern, self-denying character of these would-be reformers; then I unduly exalted the Church, giving her a power nowhere authorised in Holy Scripture; and so I advanced in the road of error; pride, self-approbation, and vanity were gratified, till at last it pleased God to allow me to be given over to believe a lie. I thank Him, that now I see once more the truth as it is in Jesus; but I cannot lie still on my couch, and look onward to the end with joy and comfort. I cry, 'Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me,' but in vain; all is darkness. Once I had light, and I

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rejected it; once the Sun of Righteousness shone brightly upon me, but I preferred a lurid meteor for my guide, and now I see neither sun nor stars."

A few days afterwards, a letter arrived from Mr. St. John Villiers; he, too, was dying, and to him also it was given to behold the error of his ways. His flock at Oxford —his misguided flock—rose up before his mind, and he spent all his remaining strength in writing to all those, so far as he knew them, whom he had been the instrument of leading into apostasy. Herbert especially was present to his mind. He well knew how strong had been the influence exercised by himself over my husband, Prideaux, Denham, and some other Oxford men, during their undergraduateship; and, as far as lay in him, he exerted himself to repair the ill done in former days. A long, penitent, and mournful letter was that of Mr. Villiers, but it was a blessing to poor Herbert, for, amidst deep self-humiliation, there breathed a hope, nay, a strong conviction, of free and full forgiveness through Christ Jesus.

"Thrice Peter denied his Lord," so ran

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the letter, "nay, he cursed and swore, thus adding crime to crime; yet Jesus looked upon him, in due time restored him, gave to his charge the sheep and lambs of His own blessed fold; and, finally endued him with such strength as enabled him to undergo martyrdom cheerfully and joyfully. So, dear Travers, if permitted, would I return to my flock, preaching to them remission of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ alone; but it cannot be. The hand of death is upon me; yet before I depart to be for ever with Him, who I trust has forgiven my unfaithfulness, I would once more speak of the only way of salvation to those friends whom I have been instrumental in leading astray."

There was much more to the same purpose, and from that time the gloom passed from Herbert's mind; a strong desire of recovery rose within him, and remained for some time. He longed to take the holy orders which he had once rejected, and, as a minister of the Church of England, to go forth and proclaim the gospel to his perishing fellow-sinners.

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Early in June he became much better, and then he often spoke of his intention, if it should please God to restore for a time his health and strength. "If it were but for a year!" he one day said, passionately, while Emily was present. She turned to him, and gently replied, "It is sweet to glorify God in life, but if He do not permit it, we must be thankful to *die* to His glory. The remembrance of the departed is oftentimes more influential than their living example and admonitions."

And the summer now came, arrayed in glory, and the earth rejoiced in her radiant beauty. Mountain, forest, river, and lake, smiled gladly in the sunshine; the roses clustered around us with their pale pink leaves, their crimson buds, or their pure white petals; the meek lilies bowed themselves on their tender green leaves, and the blue waters of Morecambe Bay flowed and ebbed, now sparkling in the morning beams, now calm and silvery beneath the light of the faint stars and the summer moon. Earth was robed in loveliness, but one who had ever loved to watch the changes of Nature and

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the varying seasons was fading fast away. His eye was bright and serene, for his soul was at peace, and patiently he awaited the hour which should call him home from a world of sin and sorrow to his Father's abode.

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CHAPTER XIV.

"When earthly light is growing dark,
Be Thou the Pilot of my bark;
Uphold me, Saviour! watch beside
My dying couch, for *Thou* hast died.
Chase every gloomy doubt away,
Lead me to full supernal day;
Oh! if it be Thy will, let me
Depart from this world peacefully."

SACRED YEAR.

ONE morning, Mr. Grahame visited us; and finding Herbert better than usual, he began to speak of Mr. St. John Villiers's letter. I sat with my work by the sofa on which my husband lay, and Emily was teaching Grace in their summer school-room, which was a fragrant bower, beneath the shade of several large trees. I went to the arbour with a book which I knew to be needed, but which Grace had forgotten to carry thither, and when I returned, I found Herbert and his visitor speaking of the

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early days of Tractarianism, of the time when its pernicious influence, though it had spread itself through the noble halls of Oxford, extended not to the outer world. As I entered the room, I heard Mr. Grahame say—

"Then Mr. Villiers first spoke to you of these semi-Romish doctrines?"

"Yes!" replied Herbert. "In the very earliest stage of 'Puseyism' I became one of its converts. You know, that even now the evangelical Christians of England are but just recovering from the first shock of alarm, so that when I embraced these opinions, seven years ago, they were confined to the University, and even to a comparatively small number within its precincts. When the seed first took root and sprang up, I cannot say; my own recollection of Puseyism dates from a well-remembered evening, when Villiers came to my rooms. I had always observed him singularly grave and silent; he never joined our dinner-parties, and but once or twice our boating excursions, and he very rarely left his own rooms. Once he had walked

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with me for a couple of hours, and I was much struck by his conversation, which seemed to breathe deep and fervent piety. On another occasion I met him returning from a distant church, where he had been officiating for a friend, and then he spoke solemnly of the sacred office of the ministry, and particularly of the necessity under which any priest or deacon of the Church of England lay, of casting aside all actions, desires, and thoughts, that tended to secularity. I was really startled to hear of the awful responsibilities I should incur in taking holy orders; and I waited to hear more, but Villiers changed the subject, and contrary to his habitual reserve, he gave me, almost unsolicited, some particulars of his own history.

"Death had carried off nearly every member of his numerous family; both his parents were gone, and of their children, only himself and one young sister survived. He had lost two sisters within six weeks, only the year before; and it is no wonder, that as he gazed on the desolated hearth which had once resounded with joy, he felt

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withdrawn from the earth, which no longer contained the loving and gentle spirits of the departed. Would that he had fixed his affections on a higher, holier love than any which the children of this world may know! But he was devoted to the Church, and, falling in with some of the first propagators of the doctrines since called Tractarian, he fell into the mistake of unduly exalting a visible church, and of enduing it with the power and infallibility which cannot pertain to anything tainted with the sin of Adam.

"I did not comprehend one half of what Villiers said, but ten days afterwards, he came to my room, after evening chapel, professedly to inquire after my health, for I had been absent from the service, and as I always attended chapel unless prevented by something very cogent, he had a very good excuse for coming to see if I were an invalid. That evening, Villiers unfolded to me by slow degrees, the IDEAS, as he called them, which he, the younger Denham, the elder Prideaux, and many others, had already adopted. He did not touch upon abstract doctrine. He spoke of '*the Church*,'

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of her apostolical descent and order, of her long-neglected feasts and fasts, of her wholesome and lost discipline.

"'The Church of England,' he went on to say, 'has long been laid waste, "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" have sat in her high places, her rulers have forgotten her high and holy descent, her pastors have not known the power and dignity of their sacerdotal office, and the people—they have laid aside all subjection and obedience to their spiritual mother. The time for restoration has come, it is yet but the day of small things, but as of old the Jewish temple sprang anew from its long desolate ruins, even so will England's Church rise again to her ancient glory; she will sit no longer in silence and bondage, but will assert her right to compel men to their salvation.'

"The last sentence struck me as being a very strange one, to come from the mouth of a Protestant clergyman; however, I only said—'But are they not very few who are willing to commence this renovation?'

"'Not so,' replied the enthusiast; his

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voice rising, and his large, dark eyes kindling; 'not so, Travers; the work is God's work, and will not He find fitting instruments? Already, the young, the noble, and the gifted, who inhabit these classic halls, have vowed themselves to this holy labour. Travers, we want men of talent, of good connexions, and above all, of unflinching, patient, and persevering energy. It strikes me, that some, if not all these qualities, are yours; you must join us; think first about it, pray about it; you cannot, dare not refuse. I, an unworthy sinner, yet a consecrated priest of God, and a successor of those to whom He said, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained," I say unto you, "Come over and help us."'

"I cannot describe to you the effect which this declamation had upon me; it seemed to me that Villiers, with his pale, high forehead, his tall, emaciated figure, and his solemn eyes, was, indeed, inspired of God to raise again from her ashes the Church of our country. From that day Villiers visited me frequently; we became intimate friends;

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and he, Denham, Prideaux, and myself, spent many hours in perusing the works of the ancient fathers."

"Are the Fathers, as they are called, entirely to be condemned?" I asked of Mr. Grahame; and the question was put with a double motive. I not only wished to know what he thought on the matter, but I feared Herbert would be exhausted with long speaking; and while Mr. Grahame answered, I was preparing some refreshment for the invalid.

"By no means, Mrs. Travers," he replied; "the *very* early Fathers are nearly, and some, I apprehend, quite free from error; as time advanced, their doctrines became less pure, they were mixed up with human traditions, and at last they breathed the very spirit of Rome herself. These Puseyites are endeavouring to rebuild the edifice which was originally raised up by the saints, as they were called, of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. Far would I be from condemning these saints *entirely*. Our own blessed Liturgy was, in a measure, of their composing; but it has pleased God to give

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us light to cast away the dross, and to retain the pure gold, by trying it in the crucible of God's own Word, and thereby discerning truth from error, and meet reverence from superstition and idolatry. I do not know a more beautiful prayer than that of St. Chrysostom, which closes our Litany, 'Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires of Thy servants as shall be most expedient for them, granting them in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting;' and this, too, after pleading the promise of our once crucified and now exalted Saviour, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there will I be in the midst of them.' Could mortal man have uttered petitions more comprehensive, and more entirely according to the will of God? No! this is asking for blessings both spiritual and temporal, with entire faith that God knows what is most expedient for His frail creatures, and will grant it through Jesus Christ, by whom the blessed promise of the hearing and answering of prayer was vouchsafed to us."

As Mr. Grahame spoke, he advanced to

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the book-case, and took from its shelves "Watts on the Mind"; he turned over its pages for several minutes, and then selected the following passage, which he read aloud:—

"I have read in some of Mr. Milton's writings a very beautiful simile, whereby he represents the books of the 'Fathers,' as they are called, of the Christian Church. 'Whatsoever,' saith he, 'Old Time with his huge drag net has conveyed down to us, along the stream of ages, whether it be shells or shell-fish, jewels or pebbles, sticks or straw, sea-weed or mud, these are the ancients, these are the 'Fathers.'

"And," continued Mr. Grahame, "I quite coincide in this matter with Dr. Watts. Among the writings of the Fathers, we find certainly the shell-fish, and the jewels, but we find also the empty shells, many common pebbles, polished by age, it is true, yet still BUT pebbles, and then there is also abundant straw, floating in all directions, and yet more mud, which being once stirred up, darkens and obscures the fountain of living truth. The tares and the wheat grow now

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together, the mud is allowed for the present to choke up, and render seemingly foul, the pure waters of the Gospel; but it will not be so always; yet a little while and the chaff will be burned, and the mud will sink, leaving clearer than ever that stream of truth whose source is in the hand of God, and which flows into the boundless ocean of eternity. Nothing can really debase its purity; what appears to be adverse circumstances, may, for a time, mar its appearance, but the day is coming when all that has sullied its blessed waters shall be swept away for ever. And now, Mr. Travers, if you are not too much tired, I should like to hear the remainder of your story. You were just telling me of some of your earliest impressions of Tractarianism."

"I need not tell you," resumed Herbert, "that those impressions long remained with me; there is little more to be told. My natural pride was pleased by the elevated position to which my friends desired to exalt me; by degrees, I learned to regard as essential the celebration of long-forgotten

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feasts and festivals, I observed strictly the fast-days appointed by the Church, and I became entirely convinced of the necessity of celibacy in those who devoted themselves to the ministry. But here I could not make the sacrifice complete; I was the last of my family, I could not bear that my name should die with me; besides, I had ever a domestic taste, I loved not the dissipation of Oxford. In my day-dreams I had long been accustomed to see myself ordained, and appointed to a quiet country benefice, and I pictured my home, shut out from the world, and a fair, affectionate wife, always ready to welcome her husband on his return from his parochial duties. I had indulged in this vision till it became very dear to me; and the more so, as, unlike most airy castles of the kind, it was quite within the bounds of possibility, nay, even of probability.

"A long mental conflict ensued; I told Villiers my perplexity, he seemed grieved, and asked time to consider about it, ere he pronounced his opinion. After several days he told me he had seriously considered the subject, and that he was of opinion that I

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had better postpone my ordination for a year or two. 'By that time,' he said, 'God will either give you grace to overcome all selfish desires and feelings; and will enable you to renounce the world and the flesh at once and for ever; or you may, if you remain in the same mind, lay aside your plans of entering the ministry, and on your own estate endeavour to promote the glory of God and His Church, by your holy example, and by your judicious endeavours to establish ecclesiastical matters in your neighbourhood on a good foundation.' This answer pleased me; from that day I became a more decided Puseyite than before!

"I visited Sir Thomas Baynton and poor Laura; I lent them the tracts which were just then appearing. I need not tell you the nature of these tracts, you know it full well. My sister and her husband became proselytes with very little argument, for Sir Thomas Baynton had always been inclined to favour Romanism, his mother having belonged to the communion of the Church of Rome; and though he, at the command of his father, had been reared a nominal

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Protestant, yet his mother's faith, her ceremonies, and, above all, her dying injunctions had sunk deep into his heart.

"I returned to Oxford. Villiers had undertaken the charge of a church very near the city, and he preached his doctrines very cautiously, but very effectually. I looked with reverence and awe on his entire devotion to the cause he had embraced. His manner was more grave than ever, his style of living more simple, and he even practised many monkish austerities. I had almost determined to follow his steps, and to give myself unreservedly to the service of the Church as he had done, when" (turning to me) "I met you, my Helen, and the current of my feelings was instantly changed.

"You have been already told, Mr. Grahame, how poor Villiers left the communion of the Church of England; how I followed his example; and how, influenced by me, Sir Thomas Baynton and his wife, and finally Mrs. Travers, took a similar step. Never once did I imagine I might be wrong, till I saw poor Laura on the brink of the

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grave. Then, as I watched that loved and lovely sister descending day by day into the dark valley of the shadow of death, I thought of our changed faith, and strange misgivings assailed my soul; but I kept them to myself; I did not even impart them to my wife; I tried to banish them; and, for a time, was successful. But there was a spirituality, a holiness in Miss Leicester's religion, which convinced me, in spite of myself, that the Church of Christ extended beyond the pale of the Church of Rome. Then came the days of sorrow and adversity. I saw my little daughter laid in the tomb of her ancestors. I saw poverty slowly but surely advancing towards me, and at last I left my beloved home, and came here. All that has passed since that time you know: I thank my God for all the sorrow which has come upon me, for it has led me to the only source of true comfort. I would fain recover, that I might devote my life to warning others against those pitfalls into which I myself fell; but the will of God be done. I know that He will appoint that which is expedient for me, and I believe He

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is about to take me from this world of sin and trial, to a better and more enduring city; to the rest which was purchased for fallen man by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself."

Herbert was too much exhausted to admit of further conversation, and I begged Mr. Grahame to go to Emily and Grace, who were walking in the garden. Herbert did not recover from the exciting effects of so much speaking for several days. I never left him; full well I knew that the hour was approaching when I should long to gaze on that beloved face, and it would be gone for ever from this earth. Dear Emily conducted my household affairs, and took charge of little Grace, so that my time was entirely given to my husband.

Now I look back upon those days with a sweet and chastened sadness. The lips that had once taught me error, taught me truth *then;* and though at times dark clouds gathered over the mind of the dying one, they soon melted away in the radiance of the gospel message declared in the holy

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Scriptures, and his hopes revived, and grew brighter and brighter to the end.

It was the close of a sultry day in July, and there was every appearance of a thunder-storm; Grace sat on a stool, reading "Line upon Line" to her father; I was busied with my needle, and Emily was making preparations for tea, when we all left our occupations for an instant to watch the dark mass of lowering clouds which rolled over Morecambe Bay. There was an awful stillness on the tree-tops; the sheep on the fells were instinctively herding themselves beneath portions of rock, walls, or whatever might afford them some degree of shelter, and the air which we breathed seemed suddenly to have become intolerably hot. Emily had left the window to attend to the tea-making, and I was endeavouring to prepare Grace for the strife of the elements which was about to take place, by explaining to her, as simply as possible, the nature of electric phenomena, and by telling her that it was the glorious God, her heavenly Father, who made the thunder, when she interrupted me by saying, "Here is a gentleman coming for shelter."

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As she spoke, a vivid flash of lightning lighted up the dark solemn hills and the heaving sea; and, amidst a peal of thunder which echoed through the deep valleys and lonely hills around our cottage, a stranger advanced towards the porch.

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CHAPTER XV.

"Friends, friends! oh! shall we meet
In a land of purer day,
Where lovely things and sweet
Pass not away?

"Shall we know each other's eyes,
And the thoughts that in them lay,
When we mingled sympathies
Passing away?

"Oh! if this may be so,
Speed, speed thou parting day!
How blest from earth's vain show
To pass away!"

F. HEMANS.

I HASTENED to admit the visitor, whom I erroneously imagined to have been brought to our cottage merely to seek shelter from the storm, which was becoming violent.

The stranger appeared to be about thirty-five years of age; he was handsome, dressed in mourning, and evidently a gentleman. Herbert, apologising for not leaving the sofa, bade his guest be seated, and begged

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him to partake of our tea, which was now nearly ready. There was a strange air of agitation on the handsome countenance of our visitor, as he thanked my husband for his hospitality; and a moment afterwards he astonished us both by saying, "Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Travers?"

An undefined sense of dread overwhelmed me. What business could the stranger have with us in our quiet retirement? I had never seen him before, and he was evidently unknown to Herbert. Before, however, I had time to make any further conjectures, Emily entered the room with the toast which she had prepared with her own hands, to tempt the delicate appetite of our dear invalid. That *she* knew the stranger was unquestionable, and that he was no ordinary, no casual acquaintance, was equally clear. A deep flush for an instant suffused her pale countenance, then it faded, and every particle of colour fled from her lips and cheeks. She struggled for composure, and, after a moment's hesitation, she offered her hand, saying, "I hope you are quite well, Mr. Morton."

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"Arthur Morton!" I exclaimed; "the Arthur Morton of Cologne?"

Arthur Morton, for it was indeed he, replied in the affirmative. There was a silence of several minutes; Herbert seemed disturbed and rather annoyed; I felt extremely indignant; and Emily, pale as a piece of sculptured marble, occupied her trembling fingers in arranging Grace's glossy hair. Mr. Morton broke the silence by saying—

"I fear I have intruded upon you rather unseasonably; but I have been searching for Miss Leicester for some months past. It was only within the last few weeks that I succeeded in tracing her to Abergwych Hall; there I was told she had followed you into Westmoreland; but your residence was either unknown, or the domestics of the Hall refused to give me the necessary information. After much inquiry I heard that a family of the name of Travers resided here, and I reached this place just as the thunder-storm began. I feel that my sudden appearance demands an apology and an explanation."

Herbert replied by inviting him to sit

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down to the tea-table, observing that the storm was a sufficient apology for any domestic invasions that might take place, and that he would be more able to enter into any further explanation when he had taken some refreshment.

I observed his mourning dress, and surmised the truth. The correctness of my suspicions was very soon proved; for Emily asked him, with the utmost calmness, "If he had left Mrs. Morton quite well." His answer was what I expected to hear, but it brought back the colour to Emily's face rather suddenly; she was evidently quite unprepared for such a disclosure. In reply to her question he said—

"Are you not then aware that Mrs. Morton lived little more than a year after our marriage? She survived your aunt only a few weeks, and died just at the time you left Baden-Baden. I have now been a widower three years; and I am here," he continued after a short pause, "to ascertain whether you, Emily, can forgive my cruel and unworthy conduct?"

Emily made no answer, and Herbert en-

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deavoured to change the conversation by referring to the storm, which now raged furiously. A pall of sable blackness hung over the dark foaming waters of Morecambe Bay; the summits of the hills were covered by a leaden mist, here and there tinged with a copper-coloured or fiery hue. The whole heavens had "gathered blackness." The electric flame darted like tongues of fire from cloud to cloud, while ever and anon one of the fearful masses seemed rent asunder, and a supernatural brilliance lighted up the old gray cliffs, the wooded valley, and the far-off waves of the rolling sea, and ere the fearful, blinding glare had passed away, another and another flash succeeded, while the thunder burst overhead in one long reiterated peal, as the hills, and vales, and deep glens, with their countless echoes, caught up the awful sound. Grace and our poor maid-servant were terribly frightened; the former crept to her father's side, and hid her face on his bosom; and as for the latter, I walked incessantly from the parlour to the kitchen, in order to re-assure her, for I feared she would faint with terror. We all became very silent,

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for the lightning flashed in at the small casements like a sheet of living flame. We took all practicable precautions, and then sat calmly awaiting the issue of this fearful strife of nature. I gazed on the countenances of my companions. Herbert and Emily looked solemn, but serene, as though they gazed on a radiant sunset; Arthur Morton was not equally composed; and as for myself, I would willingly have followed my daughter's example, and have shut out from my sight the outer world. It was long ere the storm ceased; then Herbert and Grace retired to rest, and I accompanied them, leaving Emily and Arthur Morton alone.

It was ten o'clock when I returned; Emily was then sitting in solitude at the parlour-table, and was, apparently, absorbed in deep thought. Mr. Morton was gone to the village inn, where he had engaged apartments, but had promised to return in the morning. From his conversation with Emily it appeared that the marriage so hastily concluded between himself and the beautiful Euphemia Macpherson, had proved a most

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unhappy union. Arthur Morton was really clever, intellectual, and what in the present day is called *spirituel;* he had found that his wife, although dazzling enough in company, possessed none of the mental attractions which so distinguished Emily Leicester. She could dance elegantly, sing admirably, and talk brilliantly, but as respected fireside virtues, she was sadly wanting. The themes on which Arthur loved to dwell were to her unintelligible, and, consequently, uninteresting.

By degrees they began to spend much time apart, and at last they met with all the coolness and politeness of the most indifferent acquaintances. But Arthur keenly felt his disappointment; he spent many sad and lonely hours; bitter was his regret, and the more so, as he reflected that his sorrow was of his own seeking. In his solitude, however, he had learned many blessed lessons, and he who once dwelt with such triumph on his own intellectual endowments, turned from himself with unfeigned abhorrence and penitential sorrow. Fickle in purpose and sentiment, whither might not the waves of error

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toss him? Might he not become the dupe of a false faith, a false philosophy, and a false code of affection? And he called himself a Christian, and had made a decided profession of religion! how doubly guilty then had been his conduct! The world looked upon it as dishonourable, for he had causelessly broken an avowed engagement; and if men censured his cruel breach of faith, how much more iniquitous must it appear in the sight of the God of truth

Then Arthur was led to review his past life; and he clearly saw that fickleness and the love of change had been from infancy his besetting sin. As a youth, he had passed from study to study; as a man he had pursued first one object, then another, with equal ardour. Nearly all of his female acquaintances had had, in turn, reason to deem themselves admired by him, but never, till he met Emily Leicester, had he made a decided offer of marriage. Emily's cultivated mind, and gentle, unassuming piety, had, however, won his esteem; he had sought and obtained her regard; and had then left her to all the suffering entailed by that bitterest

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of woes—disappointed and unreturned affection. Before God he bewailed his sin, and deplored the discredit which his dishonourable, unchristianlike conduct had brought upon the holy religion which he professed. One thing was now clear to him. The gay, thoughtless being, whom he had made his wife, ought in no wise to suffer for *his* fault. He therefore sought and effected a reconciliation, and endeavoured to influence Mrs. Morton's mind by the high and sacred principles, which, by the grace of God, he had adopted as his own rule of life. A few months, however, closed the scene. A rapid decline, apparently brought on by her own imprudence, laid the fair Euphemia Morton in the grave ere she had completed her twenty-third year.

A year elapsed before Arthur dared to suffer his thoughts to revert to Emily. He knew not where she was; perhaps she was already a wife; or perhaps, as no whisper of her name had reached him, her delicate frame had sunk beneath her hopeless sorrow. Even if she lived, and were disengaged, could she forgive him? and if she forgave him, was it

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at all probable that she would risk her happiness with a man who had shown himself to be devoid of settled principle and constant affection? All these questions Arthur Morton asked himself; and now, when it seemed past his reach, he felt the value of the treasure he had so heedlessly thrown away. Long he sought Emily, but, after the death of her aunt, he could obtain no tidings of her. He did not become impatient; he felt that his present disappointment was a meet chastisement, and he bowed beneath the rod. At length, Miss Morton, who had married and settled in Ireland, informed her brother that she had obtained tidings of Emily, and gave him her address at Abergwych; but when Arthur, in consequence, wrote to Miss Leicester, he received no answer, for she had left Abergwych and was at Rockenthwaite. Upon this he resolved to obtain a personal interview; and on hastening to Abergwych, discovered the true cause of her silence. He also obtained, as a clue to his search, the knowledge that she lived in Westmoreland. Thitherward he bent his steps, and was at last successful.

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"Well, Emily," I said, as she concluded her recital, "and will you trust Arthur Morton after all that has occurred?"

"Arthur is much changed," she answered; "I believe I may safely do so, but I cannot decide now. I need both friendly counsel and Divine guidance in this matter. I must make it a subject of prayer, and of thought also; but on one point I am quite determined —I will never leave *you*, my dear Helen, till brighter days shall dawn."

"Brighter days!" I repeated sadly; "oh! Emily, the brightness of my life will soon be gone for ever. Herbert cannot be with me much longer, and then there will be a gloom which only death can dissipate. You must remain with me while my dear husband continues on earth, for I must give my whole time to him; so that Grace, and my household arrangements, are necessarily dependent on your kindness; but when it shall please God to remove him, if Arthur Morton can again be to you what he once was, I will no longer detain you. And now, Emily, good-night. You must go to rest; you have had excitement enough to make you ill, and you

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will have a great deal to say to Arthur to-morrow."

That night I felt very sad. Herbert and Emily—both were to leave me: I should, ere long, be left in perfect desolation. Then I felt how selfish was my repining! My beloved husband was looking forward to his *home;* a little longer, and the weakness and pain which now so often overpowered him, would be at an end, and he would enter into rest. I sat by his side till midnight; he was in a deep sleep, but his hollow cheeks were crimsoned by the fever-flush, and his long attenuated fingers lay on the counterpane, which was scarcely whiter than his almost transparent hand. I walked to the dressing-table, and there lay a book which Miss Grahame had lent us. It was that beautiful poem of Mrs. Hemans, "The Forest Sanctuary;" I opened it carelessly, and my eyes fell on these words—

"He that sits above,
In His calm glory, will forgive the love
His creatures bear each other; even if blent
With a vain worship; for its close is dim
Ever with grief, which leads the wrung soul back to
Him!"

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My love had, indeed, been "blent with a vain worship." I had placed the creature far above the Creator. Could I be forgiven? Yes! the "dim close," which silently and surely drew nearer, hour by hour, spoke secretly of forgiveness. My Father loved me too well to leave me in possession of my idol, so He blighted it; and I watched its calm gradual decay, knowing that He chastened me in love; laying low my hope of earthly happiness, like to the cutting down of a glorious forest-tree, in order that, my shelter and protector being taken from me, I might rely solely on Him; and I knew that ere long He would teach me to say, "Thy will be done," and would fill my aching bosom

"With a deep chastening sense that all at last *was well*."

I looked out on the night. The storm had passed away, the summer moon had set behind the dark mountains, and myriads of glittering stars shone forth in the blue, solemn sky. The scene seemed to me typical of the believer's sorrow. All is bright with him; the golden sun of earthly love and

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prosperity gladdens his pilgrimage; but presently arises the storm, sweeping away the flowers and fruits that lie around him. Awhile it rages, then there is a voice on the waters which says, "Peace be still!" and immediately there is "a great calm." But, it may be, that that which constituted the glory of his mortal day has perished in the tempest. "The setting of a great hope, is like the setting of the sun," and it is night with him. "But stars arise, and the night is holy." It is a calm night too; the sorrowing one knows that his flowers and treasures are not really lost; it is only the darkness of the grave which veils them from his eyes, and so he looks around on the places which they once filled, and smiles through his tears, for soon he will see them all again; and he gazes upward at the stars, and they seem to him to resemble his radiant hopes of heaven—holy hopes, that will only melt away in the clear light of that morning which shall usher in an everlasting day. Yes, he is content to walk in the silent starlight, and if a jubilant song of triumphant praise echo not through the still and lonely watches of the

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night, there swells forth many a sweet sounding hymn, breathing of patience, hope, and faith.

The storm which was to desolate my earthly joys was quietly gathering around me: ere long it would burst and rage wildly, then it would subside. The heavy clouds would roll away again, and night would close around. But it would be "night calm and spiritual, with all her stars"—all her bright hopes of immortality and heaven. It has been said—

"It is a fearful thing to love what death may touch."

To mere mortality it *is* a fearful thing; and those only who love intensely can comprehend *how* fearful; but the Christian's love is immortal. If its object go down to the grave, his love dies not, he looks forward to a reunion where the love, unsatisfied on earth, shall, when purified, made full and perfect, constitute one of the elements of his eternal felicity. I cannot believe that those who are gone into that land of light, *forget*. Love is of the soul, and the soul, freed from her fleshly chains, is alive,

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though the mortal frame be mouldering in the dust. Well says the poetess of those whom,

> "in their far repose,
> We call the dead"—
>
> "Their passionate adieu,
> Was it but breath, to perish? Holier trust
> Be mine! our love is there, but purified from dust.'

It must be so: I cannot think that loss of memory would be a blessing—that earthly ties will be forgotten. On the contrary, I do feel assured that the redeemed can, do, and ever will, throughout the ages of eternity, regard with affection those whom on earth they loved in Christ Jesus. Were they not all members of their Great Head? Are they not all stones of one glorious building, of which our Lord Himself is the great corner-stone? Are they not then *inseparably* joined in Him? Besides, our Master Himself went down into the tomb; as a man, He died, and when He rose again from the dead, He still loved those whom He loved during His earthly life. The recreant Peter was not forgotten; as of old, He called His disciples "children," and even

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while He was parted from them and carried up into heaven, He blessed them. We shall surely be made partakers of His death and resurrection; and shall we not, like Him on the morning of *our* resurrection, recognise the beloved ones of our mortal existence, and hold sweet communication with them, when we meet in the mansions of our Father's house? *Certainly* there will be no sorrow there; and "though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

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CHAPTER XVI.

"Hark! for the lonely bell is pealing,
Through the still vale its echo dies;
Like love's last knell that sound is stealing,
And though a bright world round us lies,
Unmoved we pass by stately forest glade,
Or brooklet path, or steadfast mountain shade."

SACRED YEAR.

ON the following morning, Arthur Morton returned to us; he remained several weeks at Rockenthwaite, and we saw much of him. That he was greatly changed, I doubted not. It was obvious that he was no longer the fickle, restless being who had desolated Emily's heart at Cologne; but still I feared to intrust to him so precious a treasure as was my own beloved friend. Emily, however, was more confiding. Arthur, she said, maintained a constant struggle against his besetting sin, however trivially it might be developed, and that, not

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in his own strength; and she once more trusted him implicitly. Somewhat of the freshness of earlier years now returned to the quiet pale face, and a gleam of girlish lustre came back to the soft pensive eyes, which, though ever bearing the impress of peace and content, never sparkled with gaiety. And in the happiness of my Emily, I could, and did rejoice, though day by day the clouds hung lower and darker over the path of my own life.

About the middle of August, Herbert's health suddenly became much worse. A few days wrought a fearful change. Arthur Morton had been spending a week at Windermere and Ulswater; and when he returned, I saw how much he was startled at the alarming alteration. From that hour this dear friend of my Emily became to me as a brother. He shared my watch by the couch of the dying one, and he walked with little Grace, and helped to amuse her, when Emily was occupied with other matters.

For a few days, life and death seemed to meet, and to struggle with each other, and

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then, to the surprise of all, Herbert rallied. Mr. Grahame spent much time with him, and one evening, when he had just departed, Herbert communicated to me his determination to attend divine service once more in the village church. I endeavoured to dissuade him, but uselessly. He had several times joined in public worship at Rockenthwaite; but the next Sunday was appointed for the administration of the Lord's Supper, and my dear husband desired once again to receive that holy sacrament as a Protestant, before he departed this mortal life. I feared the result, but Herbert seemed confident of strength to go through the service. The Sabbath morning came; a calm, bright, autumnal Sabbath; the clear Westmoreland sky overhead, and the fading, yet gorgeous woods around us.

It was a touching sight to see one on whom Death's pale hand so visibly rested, kneeling once more in the sanctuary of the Lord. Sweetly then, to my ears, sounded the Liturgy of England's Church, and from the bottom of my heart I thanked God for her ordinances, so untainted by the error

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and superstition which mar the services of the Romish Church.

Grace knelt by her father. There was the parent, in whose eyes, despite his pale, spirit-like features, there dwelt a light not of this world, and on whose brow lay an expression so pure and holy, yet so humble, that all men might see and behold the work of God's holy Spirit; and there was the blooming child with her glowing cheeks, and clear, untroubled eyes, ever and anon turning with a look of inexpressible affection on her beloved father. It was a sight which could not but affect the most indifferent beholder.

Mr. Grahame chose for his text, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He evidently chose it with reference to Herbert; and his sermon was full of comfort and promise to one who trode the very confines of the valley of the shadow of death. At length the sermon was over, the mingled congregation retired, and the communicants only remained. The September sun shone in at the Gothic windows

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of the little village church, and lighted up the tombs of bygone generations; but the table of the Lord lay in calm, soft shadow, bearing the yet unconsecrated elements, covered by a fair white linen cloth.

The aged pastor came slowly up the aisle, and with meek reverence bowed his head in silent prayer, ere he commenced his ministrations. Oh! how refreshing was this quiet simplicity, in comparison with the pompous ceremonial of Romanism! Every word of that sacramental service fell with power on my heart. Surely God blessed it to me! The offertory being concluded, Mr. Grahame turned to the communicants, saying, "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth." Not for the Church of England alone; not only for those of our own communion, but for all who call upon the name of Jesus, from pole to pole, is that prayer offered up. How different this from the unchristian narrow-mindedness which would say, "Unless ye are fellow-worshippers with us, ye are not brethren!"

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Very solemnly did Herbert join in the confession of sin, and afterwards in the glorious hymn of praise—"Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name," &c. That sublime song seemed to bring us of the Church militant into very close communion with the members of the Church triumphant; and I felt that the beloved friend, whose solemn responses sounded so feebly, yet so fervently, on my ear, stood between two worlds—the visible, and the unseen. Down time's long stream his vessel had sailed; now its course was widening, its rushing waters were pouring rapidly into the mighty ocean of eternity, and the wearied voyager knew that rest was at hand. For the last time Herbert knelt at the chancel rail. Once we had bowed together before a false shrine, to worship the idol-wafer; now the infinite mercy of our God had brought us back; and meekly, and I trust in faith, we received together the memorials of a Saviour's dying love, and listened to the solemn aspiration, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was

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shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

After all had communicated, we sang, according to the custom at our village church, a hymn which is a favourite one in some parts of Westmoreland; the concluding chorus ran thus—

> "A Saviour, let creation sing,
> A Saviour, let all heaven ring;
> He's God with us, we feel Him ours,
> His fulness in our souls He pours—
> 'Tis almost done—'tis almost o'er—
> We're joining those who're gone before;
> We soon shall meet to part no more."

The tune which we sang was strange and unmelodious; but no matter, there was melody in the hearts of the singers; and that bright hope of meeting to part no more, beamed sweetly upon our hearts.

Once again the voice of united prayer resounded through the little sanctuary:—"O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." How touching is that plea—"Thou that takest away the sins of the world!" Alas for those who know not this

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Lamb of God as *God Himself!* who will not kneel at His feet, and call upon His holy name, as mighty and merciful to save; who will not say, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me." Alas for such poor, hopeless, homeless beings, leaning upon a reed which will snap in the hour of need, building a house on the quicksands of the shore, and daubing it with untempered mortar! If Christ be not known as God He is nothing; He is no more than any mere excellent child of mortality. Surely those who dishonour Christ by refusing Him their trust and their prayers, the rightful allegiance which man owes to Divinity, must forget that Jesus once said, "I and My Father ARE ONE." It is a fearful thing to withhold from God the honour due unto Him; and they do this who honour not the Son even as they honour the Father. But let us entertain no scorn for these unhappy ones: rather let us weep over them, and pray for them, and mourn that the god of this world has so blinded their eyes. A little while, and Jesus, the persecuted, the crucified, the contemned, shall come to call the earth to

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judgment; then will His kingdom be established, and all things shall be put under His feet.

But I have wandered far from that solemn communion service in the quiet village church at Rockenthwaite. The holy hymn of mingled praise and prayer ceased; the grey-haired pastor stretched forth his trembling hands over his flock, and, with patriarchal simplicity, blessed the kneeling congregation. "Amen!" swelled from many a fervent heart, and all quietly dispersed to their peaceful homes amid the green valleys and lonely hills of that fair land.

That Sunday evening was a blessed one. Herbert and I sat alone in our little parlour watching the darkening landscape, and talking of the past. We reviewed the darkness and the error which had so long clouded our spiritual path; we traced the love of our God, who had sent sorrow and privation to our home, in order that, amid anguish and distress, we might turn our footsteps towards a better and more enduring habitation on high; and then we contemplated the future. For myself, the prospect seemed lonely

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enough; for Herbert, it was glorious beyond expression; and we talked calmly of our approaching separation, as being but a temporary and partial parting, for Herbert believed with me, that the Church of Christ above, and the Church of Christ below, do, indeed, form but one communion. How can it be otherwise, when all the members are united in one Head? And so passed that Sabbath-day. Night veiled the solemn mountains, and the luxuriant valleys, yet still we held converse—sweet, blessed converse—to be renewed no more on earth.

When the day of rest returned, Herbert, my beloved Herbert,—he for whom I had sacrificed peace of mind and conscience,—he who had been my soul's idol, lay in the cold, dreamless sleep of death. Rapidly the final change took place. He said but little, for nature was exhausted; yet on his brow was enthroned the very spirit of peace. "Depart in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," had been whispered by a voice inaudible by mortal ears. Mr. Grahame stood by the couch of death, and just ere the last change

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took place, he bent over Herbert, and asked,—

"My dear friend, is it light now? Is the *One Mediator* sufficient?"

Life and perception were ebbing fast; but those beloved lips opened once again, and the dying believer slowly answered—

"More than sufficient. I now see and know clearly that Jesus Christ is the *only* Saviour."

We watched for some time; colder and colder grew the hand which I held within my own, each breath was fainter than the last, when once more he spoke—

"My Helen, we shall meet again."

That was the last effort of expiring nature. A few moments more and the ransomed spirit returned to the God who gave it.

After the lapse of a few hours I went alone to the chamber of death. How great was the change! The face that had never once met mine save with a smile of fond affection was motionless now. How like a dream appeared the last few years of my life! I looked back to my first interview with

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Herbert in the Oxford meadow, to our earliest intercourse, to our engagement, to my dishonest renunciation of Protestantism, to our marriage, to the birth of my children, to our Welsh home, and lastly, to the lingering illness which had now taken from me the desire of my eyes. I thank God that in that hour of bitter anguish—anguish such as only the bereaved can know—I was enabled to say, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Arthur Morton arranged all things for me with the kindness of a brother, and within a few days the mortal remains of my dear husband were borne, not to the tomb of the proud Travers, but to the lowly churchyard of Rockenthwaite. I saw him laid in the grave, there to rest till the morning of the resurrection. There shall his mortal frame repose in peace, till the voice of the archangel shall awaken the sleepers in the dust. Then shall my Herbert arise, and corruption and mortality shall be exchanged for incorruption, and for a blessed and glorious immortality.

It is the custom in some parts of

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Westmoreland and Cumberland to sing a funeral hymn over the grave of the departed, and the custom was not forgotten in this case. The sweet, mournful melody rose on the still air, and rang through the woods which shaded the tombs of those who slept in the peaceful country churchyard. And I had strength, in that hour of bitterest anguish, to listen to the requiem-like music, as it swelled on the mild autumnal breeze, and to see the grave close over the being who had been for more than seven years my world—my entire world. How was this? In the deepest darkness of affliction's night, a consoling voice had whispered, "It is well!" and now the mists of error were all cleared away, and I could rejoice in the glorious hope of meeting my beloved Herbert in the world beyond the grave.

On the following Sunday Mr. Grahame preached from the words, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." I was not present, for physical strength had at last given way, and I was laid on the couch of sickness. Emily, and Arthur Morton, and my little Grace attended by my special desire, and

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from the two former I heard the greater part of the good man's sermon. Emily said that he spoke of the blessedness of the dead in Christ, till his cheek glowed and his eye kindled with more than the fire of youth. Then he closed his Bible, and solemnly asked his hearers to examine themselves whether they LIVED in Christ, so that when they, too, should descend into the dark, cold valley, they might be able to say, "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me," and that at the morning of the resurrection, when the dead shall be raised, and the living changed, they might be found in Him.

"For fifty years," said the aged pastor, "have I ministered among you. Many of you have I received into the visible Church of Christ by baptism; to many, I, first, have administered the Lord's Supper; many of you I have united in the bands of holy matrimony; and many, very many, have I laid under yonder ancient trees, there to 'lie down and wake no more' till the resurrection morning shall dawn. Year after year—yea, for half a century—I have declared unto you from Sabbath to Sabbath, as we have

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met here, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, for to-day is the fifty-first anniversary of my first preaching in this church. My ministrations here are nearly at a close; the time of my departure must of necessity be at hand; but brethren—MY CHILDREN I would say—WE SHALL MEET AGAIN; and in that day you will either be my joy, and crown of rejoicing, or I must witness against you, that I preached to you of eternal life, and of the things pertaining to your everlasting peace, and that ye refused to hear, or hearing, refused to obey."

Then the old man thanked his people for their love, and sympathy, and support, through many years of trials, and mingled joy and sorrow; and when he spoke of the time when another pastor should stand in his place, all the congregation lifted up their voices and wept, for to many a rude bosom and simple heart the aged minister was very dear. It was he who had baptized them, married them, buried their dead, and sanctified, by services of the Church, their household joys and griefs.

Mr. Grahame never again declared the

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words of truth to his beloved people. On the evening of the day preceding the next Sabbath, he was taken suddenly ill. The sanctuary was closed on the following morning, for no minister could be found able to leave his own charge. In the evening, a young clergyman came from a distant village; and while the inhabitants of Rockenthwaite joined in the concluding hymn, the spirit of their venerable pastor departed.

The next morning the sad news was known; the death-bell tolled mournfully, and flung its solemn echoes over sea and mountain; and the song of the redbreast sounded somewhat in melancholy strain, as it rang through the fading woods, whose rich foliage was bright with all the gorgeous hues of a northern October. Mr. Grahame was buried near my beloved husband, whose funeral, and funeral sermon, had been his closing work.

Arthur Morton left us, with an understanding that, at no distant time, he was to return and claim Emily as his bride. Early in the next year the new vicar and his family

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arrived; and a little later, the noble Lord of Rockenthwaite Castle came to reside on his ancestral estate, bringing with him his only child, a beautiful motherless boy, about twelve years of age.

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CHAPTER XVII.

"Lit from within was her noble brow,
As an urn, whence rays from a lamp may flow;
Her young cheek had a changeful hue,
As if ye might see how the soul wrought through;
And every flash of her fervent eye
Seem'd the bright wakening of poesy."

FELICIA HEMANS.

IT was a sad trial to Miss Grahame to leave the vicarage, in which she had lived the greater part of her life. Just before she left Westmoreland to reside with a niece who lived in an adjoining county, she spent a few days with Emily and myself; and we parted with mutual regret.

The first week in February brought the Stantons to their new abode. They arrived on Friday evening, and on Sunday Mr. Stanton preached his introductory sermon. He was a man past the meridian of life, somewhat grey-headed, but of noble pre-

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sence. He had a fine voice, and a delicate musical ear. His views, so far as he had any, seemed to be, in the main, evangelical; but he contented himself with one set of sermons, which had been written soon after his first preferment.

Mrs. Stanton was a quiet, and rather melancholy-looking woman, who, while her husband was devoting all his energies to the establishment of a church-choir, applied all hers to the mysteries of the culinary art; to the management of the store-room; and to the knitting of woollen articles of all shapes and sizes.

The Misses Stanton, five in number, were, like their father, passionately fond of music. They all sang, and possessed the somewhat rare accomplishment of singing correctly in parts. They had, moreover, a taste for novelty, and a decided love of pre-eminence and authority; and one fine morning in March, Emily and I were surprised by a visit from the whole group, who came to beg our assistance in "*getting up*," as they said, "a few anthems." I, of course, declined all participation in any-

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thing which tended to lead me from my seclusion.

Only six months had passed since the time of my bitter trial, and although calmness was restored, and I could generally contemplate the past with tranquillity, I still felt that, if it should please God, I would rather never again mingle with the outer world. That term, indeed, could hardly have applied to Rockenthwaite, under the pastoral care of dear old Mr. Grahame; but the new vicar and his daughters made so great a sensation by their Hullah system, and by the subscription which they had set on foot for a new organ, that I was fain to keep myself, as much as possible, in the background.

Emily's marriage was to take place in the beginning of May; and on the plea of being about to leave Westmoreland, she, too, declined to take any part in the musical experiments which the young ladies so earnestly desired to promote. The Misses Stanton, therefore, departed, perhaps a little mortified; but the church music gradually improved, for the school children were assembled twice a week at the vicarage, to

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practise chants and hymn tunes, and at these meetings the vicar himself, with a roll of music-paper in his hand, acted as conductor of the band.

All this was well, but the vicar carried his improvements no further; and, what was worse, many of the old and really excellent institutions of the parish were suffered to languish for want of support. I must not forget, however, that he replaced our fife and violin ("trumpet and shawm," as the old clerk and his colleague, the sexton, called them) by a small but sweetly-toned organ, on which he caused to be inscribed the concluding verse of the 150th Psalm, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!"

The Psalmist exhorts us to praise God with stringed instruments and organs; and certainly that glorious instrument, the organ, cannot be used for any purpose more noble and excellent than that of supporting and consolidating the harmony produced by the vocal praises of Christian worshippers.

The sermons that we now heard presented a sad contrast to Mr. Grahame's

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simple, yet deeply experimental, discourses; they were, at the best, useful moral essays, imbued with something of the spirit of Christianity, and delivered in the most appropriate tone and style. But I have said enough of the Stantons; let me now speak of another arrival, which almost immediately succeeded theirs.

After an absence of twelve years, the Lord of Rockenthwaite had returned to his ancestral castle. He brought with him a maiden sister, and his only child, the young Lord Trefusis, as whose tutor he engaged a Mr. Ormiston, the son of an excellent Cumbrian clergyman.

The Earl seemed disposed to live on sociable terms with his tenants and neighbours. He had known something of my late husband in his early days, having met him at Naples, and having subsequently spent some time with him in visiting the adjacent country. About a fortnight after his arrival at Rockenthwaite, his sister, the Lady Jane, came to visit me. She was a quiet, elderly lady, very simply dressed, and possessing that "excellent thing in women," a peculiarly

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gentle tone of voice, together with a singularly amiable expression of countenance. Lady Jane was "a Christian indeed," and Emily was delighted to think that I should have so excellent a friend, when she should have left me.

I went but seldom to the Castle; but Lady Jane, after the first week of our acquaintance, rarely passed a day without either visiting our cottage, or sending me some message. She frequently took Grace with her to the Castle, and my little girl speedily became the favourite playmate, or rather plaything, of the young Lord Trefusis. Under these circumstances, the spring once more came upon us.

The family at the vicarage were busy as ever with their chants, and anthems, and voluntaries; the Earl rode about the village, making acquaintance with the cottagers; Lady Jane was similarly occupied; and, not unfrequently, Lord Trefusis came to our cottage, begging me to let him have Miss Travers to take care of.

Emily was at this time busy in preparing for her marriage. A great change had taken

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place in her. The shade of resigned yet bitter sorrow had entirely passed away from her now clear, placid brow, and her calm, dark eyes; but her joy was chastened as had been her grief. Now that the sunshine of earthly love brightened her long lonely path, Emily's lovely character displayed the same quiet consistency, and the same beauty of holiness which had characterised it in her days of anguish and dismay. Once, indeed, she told me that her fair prospects were a temptation to her; that, during the season of public and private devotion, she often found her thoughts wandering towards her beloved friend, and the brilliant future. She spoke, too, of that clause of the Liturgy, "In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us;" taking, of course, the expression *wealth*, to mean, as it truly does, temporal happiness and prosperity, and not confining it to the mere accumulation of riches, as some erroneously do. Dear Emily felt this petition to be singularly appropriate to her case. "The time of tribulation" had, for a season, passed away; and it comforted her to know, that He who had kept her in all the storms of

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that season of darkness, would watch over her during the bright days of mortal gladness.

May at length arrived, and with it Arthur Morton; and he and Emily were united by Mr. Stanton, in the old church of Rockenthwaite. The Earl gave the bride away, and my little Grace delightedly officiated as bridesmaid. Very sorrowful were my feelings on that sweet May morning; and, as we re-crossed the churchyard, my eyes turned, with overflowing tears, to the peaceful shade where slumbered the mortal remains of him who had been dearer to me than life itself. My Emily, my tried and faithful friend, who had shared with me so many joys and sorrows, was about to leave me.

Her husband, as I clearly saw, dreaded our parting, and Emily herself grew paler and paler, as the moment of separation approached. The days were long since past with me, in which every emotion had been *uncontrollable;* and I was enabled to suppress the torrents of tears that struggled to burst forth, until Emily and her husband had actually departed. *Then,* I sat down in

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my desolate chamber, and wept without restraint. Never before had I felt so utterly alone.

The May of the preceding year, when Herbert, Emily, and myself had welcomed together the return of spring—our journey to Carlisle—the last weeks of suffering—the hour of death—the awful stillness that lay on those calm, placid features, when the immortal spirit had left its worn and wearied tenement—all these things returned to my recollection, and the memory of them was exceedingly solemn. How many hours of watchfulness had I passed in that very chamber! How often had I sat there, from midnight till bright dawn, gazing on the wasted features of the sleeper; not resting myself, because I knew that in a very little while the cold turf would cover the beloved form, and I could not bear to waste in sleep the few waning hours during which I might still sit by his side, and watch his short and feverish slumbers.

I know not how long I had sat, weeping and musing sadly on the past, when Grace entered the room, and throwing her arms

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around my neck, besought me not to cry any longer. So sweetly did she comfort me that my tears did, indeed, cease to flow. She had long tales to tell me of cowslip-balls and daisy-chains, which she and Philip (for so we now called the young Lord Trefusis) had made the day before; and how they had seen through the telescope a very strange-looking vessel crossing the Bay. And thus, with her innocent prattle, did my little daughter beguile my sadness.

And now, having particularised the events of each successive spring, summer, autumn, and winter, from the time of my leaving school, to the marriage of my beloved Emily Leicester, I must pass on to a period not far distant from the time at which I am now writing. Ten years quietly glided on. Emily and her husband, with their three sweet children, came during several successive summers to visit me and Grace in our cottage. To describe the calm happiness of Emily would be impossible. Her wedded life was indeed a tranquil one; and as she and her husband walked in the paths of holiness and peace, so did they desire, in

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the same pleasant paths, to train up their little ones.

Very lovely were Emily's three daughters (for as yet she had no son). They were sweet, dark-eyed little girls, very much resembling their mother; and Helen, the eldest of the three, was very nearly what Emily had been when I first saw her in the school-room of Brindsley Court.

Of course, when separated from each other, my friend and I corresponded regularly; and Miss Grahame also wrote to me frequently. Lady Jane was my intimate friend. She took a deep interest in Grace, and materially assisted me in her education.

During this lapse of years, little occurred worthy of note. Through the unwearied kindness and strenuous exertions of Arthur Morton, nearly the whole of my own property—that property, I mean, which I had inherited from my Aunt Selwyn—had been restored to me; and now, possessing ample means for the quiet and inexpensive life which we led, I indulged Grace by visiting the Lake district, and, during two successive

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summers, we actually reached the Highlands of Scotland.

The Earl spent much of his time in London, but Lord Trefusis, who was now at Cambridge, remained, together with his tutor, with Lady Jane at the Castle, during the university vacations. He was now a fine youth, and was preparing to travel for a year in Germany, accompanied by Mr. Ormiston.

I must not forget to mention that the vicar died very suddenly of apoplexy, and that the living of Rockenthwaite was given to Mr. Francis Ormiston, a cousin of Philip's tutor, an excellent and highly-gifted young clergyman, who, while he adopted all the real improvements effected by Mr. Stanton, trod, in all essential points, in the good old ways of Mr. Grahame, of hallowed and beloved memory.

Sir Thomas Baynton, having remained many years abroad, eventually married a Protestant Swiss lady, who returned with him to Merelands. They came to visit me; Lady Baynton was a lovely and truly pious young woman; and I soon discovered that

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Sir Thomas was no longer the Romanist of earlier days. He had returned, in penitence, to the pure faith of the Gospel; and though, when I gazed upon the gay, blooming Louise, I could not help shedding many tears at the remembrance of poor Laura, I nevertheless saw abundant cause for thankfulness in this new union; for Louise, who was the daughter of a Protestant Swiss pastor, offered one of the brightest examples of the Christian character that my eyes ever beheld.

Often, during this period, did I think of Laura, as I had seen her when she came to Abergwych, arrayed in her fearful, yet surpassing beauty; and when I looked at Grace, growing, as she now was, into womanhood, I traced in her the same clear loveliness of expression—the same queenly carriage—the same radiant dark eyes—the same deep spiritual gaze—and, above all, the same bright bewitching smile, that had given to the countenance of her beauteous aunt its most fascinating expression. Grace, my beautiful and highly-gifted child, had now reached her seventeenth summer. With Lady Jane and myself she spent her whole time, the only

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intruders upon our retirement (and welcome intruders they were) being Mr. Ormiston, his cousin, and Lord Trefusis. The latter, especially, spent long mornings with us; he read to us while we worked, or he sang to Grace's accompaniment on the harp or pianoforte. Very soothing were those years of calm! a blessed rest! My darling child was growing up all that a Christian mother's heart could desire; and I could gaze peacefully on the tomb of the beloved partner of my early days, and rejoice that the days of *his* mourning were ended. I had a good hope of rejoining him in a better world; and that bright anticipation was effectual to chase away the rising tear, and to dispel the gathering gloom. But I must hasten, now, to a time when it pleased God once again to darken for a while my earthly life.

It had never occurred to me that the affection which evidently existed between Philip Trefusis and my Grace could be other than that of brother and sister. I looked on my daughter as still a child. I quite overlooked the important fact that she had been

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educated among people all older by many years than herself; that she had, in fact, never associated with children of her own age, and, therefore, that the thoughts and feelings of womanhood were necessarily developed at a period unusually early.

One bright morning in June, as Grace and myself were sitting in Lady Jane's dressing-room, Philip came in laden with flowers from the green-house. He called Grace from her drawing to help him to arrange the flower-vases, and he filled a basket with choice fuchsias, geraniums, and heliotrope for me. There were still some flowers left in a separate basket, finer than any of the others. I imagined them to be destined for Lady Jane, whom Philip most tenderly loved, and I thought no more of them, till, going into Grace's room the following day, I found the self-same flowers placed in a small and exquisitely beautiful Etruscan vase.

"Why surely," I said, "these are the flowers that I saw yesterday at the Castle; how came you by them, my dear; and whence came this very elegant little vase?"

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"Philip brought them last night, mamma, when you and Lady Jane were walking on the terrace," replied Grace; "and he gathered them on purpose for me; and the vase, I believe, he procured for me, too; is he not very kind?"

"Very kind, my love," I answered, and still I saw nothing suspicious in this pretty gift. But I soon observed that the cherished flowers were supplied with fresh water every morning, and that Grace gathered each dead petal as it fell, dried it, and preserved it among her own special treasures. Then like lightning the truth flashed upon my mind! I knew the state of my Grace's heart, though she herself knew it not. A mind more pure and guileless than hers could not be imagined; and as she knew of no disguises, and I observed her closely, it was impossible that I could be deceived. Although she said but little of Philip, I perceived that everything was done with reference to him; she played the airs that he loved; she sketched the views that he admired; she cherished his favourite flowers and shrubs; and, in short, acted much in the same way

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as I myself had done some eighteen years before.

And now my happy tranquillity was at an end; that Philip Trefusis returned Grace's affection I could not doubt; but then,—his father! Was it at all probable that the Earl of Pengarth would choose, or even permit, that his only son, the heir of his earldom and his broad lands, should enter into an alliance so unpretending? True, Grace could lay claim to blood nowise inferior to his own; but then, was she not a mere rural beauty, totally ignorant of the fashions and ceremonies of the great world? Too well I knew the depth of my Grace's character to imagine for a moment that this affection might be a mere girlish fancy, which would evaporate in a few pensive sighs. The mischief was done; and prudence, alas! was now all too late. I was much distressed, for I knew not how soon my Grace's sweet dream might be roughly dispelled. The Earl had just returned to the Castle; his quick penetration would soon divine his son's secret; and then, perhaps, might follow Philip's temporary banishment from Rockenthwaite,

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with an imperative injunction to hold no further intercourse, either by word or letter, with Miss Travers. And then I thought of my gentle Grace; her sweet open brow becoming clouded day by day; her rich bloom vanishing; and, perhaps, her fragile frame sinking under what would appear to her to be unreturned affection. Ah! my heart was very faithless then! I quite forgot how I had been upheld in former days of trial; and I feared greatly and ungratefully, as the clouds of sorrow once more arose in the horizon. I required yet more teaching in spiritual things, and the lesson was at hand.

Lord Pengarth came frequently with Lady Jane to visit us, and, by special invitation, we were very frequently at the Castle. I saw, with deep regret, the increasing strength of the silken bonds which bound my daughter. I observed Philip and Grace, as only mothers *can* observe; and I observed the Earl, too—for Philip's devotion was so evident, that Lady Jane was convinced that a declaration was at hand. One morning I received a note from the Earl of Pengarth, requesting me to grant him a private inter-

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view at my cottage that evening, on *urgent* business, which concerned us both; and adding, that Lady Jane would call that afternoon, and, with my permission, wished to take back Grace to dine and spend the evening at the Castle.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

"There is a reaper whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

"Oh! not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away."

LONGFELLOW.

HOW I dreaded the arrival of Lord Pengarth may be very easily imagined, for I had no doubts as to the subject of our evening's conversation.

Lady Jane called for Grace about three in the afternoon, informing me at the same time that her brother had sent Philip to Kendal on some slight commission. When Grace was gone, I knelt down in my own room, and prayed fervently that if God saw fit to mar the earthly hopes and wishes of my darling

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child, He would keep us both from murmuring at His dispensations; and that if He, in His infinite wisdom, thought fit to desolate the heart of my beloved daughter, He would Himself fill it with a peace which is not of this world, even that peace which passeth all understanding.

That my child was a Christian, I could not doubt. She said very little even to me on the subject of religion; but it was evident to all beholders that her conduct was influenced by divine grace. The last weeks of her dear father's life were indelibly impressed on the pages of her memory; she had seen the cold death-damps settle on his brow; she had perceived, child as she then was, that heart and flesh were failing, but that God was the strength of his heart and his portion for ever. As she grew older, I told her the mournful tale of our apostasy from the pure faith of the Bible, and it made a deep impression on her youthful mind, but it was not till she reached her sixteenth year, that I felt quite assured of her having indeed chosen the better portion.

Now, I endeavoured to leave my dear

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Grace in the hands of Him who had taught her to look to Himself as the sole refuge and comfort of fallen man; and with a calmed spirit I took my needle-work into the drawing-room, there to await Lord Pengarth's arrival. At length he came.

The Earl of Pengarth was about fifty years of age. He was a Christian, not only in name, but in deed and truth: and there was a singular quaintness in his manners, which were those of a polished courtier of the old school. On the present occasion he paid the usual civilities, quietly asked me to make him some tea, and then spoke of indifferent subjects, till all things were arranged to his satisfaction at the tea-table. Very gravely he then began to speak of the attachment of Lord Trefusis to my daughter. He told me that he had spoken to his son about it that very morning, and that Lord Trefusis had immediately acknowledged it, but had declared that he had never made any avowal of his sentiments to Miss Travers herself.

"Now you see, Mrs. Travers," continued

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the Earl, "what is done cannot be undone. The question therefore is, does Miss Grace respond to this affection on the part of my son? I would not be so impertinent as to say that I am clear on that point, but it is my opinion that she does so. The next thing is, what do you, madam, think of this affair?"

"I feel," I replied, "that I have been to blame in allowing Grace to spend so much time in the company of Lord Trefusis; but, believe me, I never dreamed of such a thing as a mutual attachment till within the last month; and I have since been very uneasy on this point, being well aware that Lord Trefusis has a right to expect a higher and more distinguished alliance. I now leave it to you, my lord, to decide upon the line of conduct to be pursued."

Lord Pengarth was silent for several minutes; at length he said, "Mrs. Travers, I have no ambitious designs respecting my son; I wish him to marry within two or three years, and I am most desirous that his wife should be a Christian gentlewoman. I wish, and can wish, for nothing better. Now,

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where can I find one in whose everyday life the graces of early piety shine as brightly as they shine in that of your sweet daughter, Grace? If then you, madam, consent to this union, I shall be most thankful and happy. Grace is very beautiful, highly intellectual, accomplished, and sweet-tempered; and if my son had consulted me, I should have advised him to make this choice."

My answer need not be told. Lord Pengarth and I sat discussing the future prospects of our children till long after sunset—indeed, till Grace herself appeared in Lady Jane's little pony-carriage. Lord Pengarth drew her towards him, and imprinted a fatherly kiss on her fair forehead as he wished her good-night. She looked surprised, but said nothing; for, generally speaking, the Earl was rather remarkable for a certain degree of stiffness, and for what those who did not understand him called coldness and hauteur.

A thankful heart was mine, as that night I laid my head on my pillow.

Before noon on the following day, Lord

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Trefusis called. He saw me alone, thanked me ardently for what he called my kindness, and ended by saying, "Now I shall have a mother; I do not remember my own mother; you must let me be *your* son, Mrs. Travers — your son in everything, not only in name; of course you will live with Grace and me at the Castle, and (God willing) we shall be very, very happy together."

Much more he added; and then, with my blessing, he sought Grace, who was walking alone in the shrubbery. Lady Jane came in the evening to rejoice with me, and all was finally arranged. Philip was still to spend a year or two in Germany, and then the marriage was to take place. The next day I wrote to Emily, and Grace begged to secure little Helen Morton as one of her future bridesmaids.

In the autumn of that year, Lord Trefusis set out for Germany. He was more desponding than Grace. He told me afterwards that a dark presentiment of sorrow hung over him, and that he battled with it, as foolish and sinful; but without success. Grace bore

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his departure with the utmost fortitude, though it was a severe trial; and for the first few days of his absence, she ceased to sing and laugh, and to look, as she usually did, as gleesome as a child.

The first letter, however, cheered her wonderfully. The time, she said, would soon pass over, and Philip would be at Rockenthwaite again; and, in the interim, she felt that she had abundance of occupation in her usual duties, and in the qualifying of herself for the high and responsible situation, which, as the wife of the future Earl, she would be called to fill.

Philip had left us about a month, when I received a letter from Arthur Morton. He used frequently to direct his wife's letters; the address, therefore, in his handwriting, did not surprise me, but I was considerably startled to find that he had also written the contents. He told me that Emily—his Emily and mine—was dying; that her medical attendants gave not the slightest hope of her recovery; and he implored me to hasten immediately to them, as

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Emily earnestly desired to see me once again.

I left Grace in Lady Jane's charge, and set out that very day, and, as I travelled by railway, I reached Thornbury, in Gloucestershire, on the following afternoon. Arrived thither, I had still a few miles further to go, and when I reached Arthur's residence, the shades of night were rapidly gathering over the surrounding country. I sprang from the carriage, anxiously looking for Arthur Morton. He was not in waiting; strange domestics assisted me to alight, and it was not till I stood in the hall that Emily's favourite maid came to meet me. She was very pale, and her eyes were swollen with weeping. When she saw me, her tears burst forth afresh, and she could not speak. I needed not to ask any questions; the dismayed and solemn countenances of all the servants, and the awful stillness of the house, spoke but too plainly. At length Hester recovered herself sufficiently to tell me, that that very day, at noon, my beloved friend had departed this life, and that Mr. Morton begged to be

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excused from meeting me till the next morning.

I went to the nursery, and visited the bereaved children's apartments. Helen and Laura had wept themselves to sleep; and the little one, a pretty creature of four years old, lay wide awake in her cot, singing and talking to herself, all unconscious of her loss.

Early in the morning, before the rest of the household was astir, I went to Emily's chamber. By her side lay the long-wished-for son—a frail, delicate babe, who, having just breathed the cold air of this lower world, had departed hence, to await, in a holier region, a re-union with his mother, who survived him but three days. Emily's rapid illness had considerably changed her sweet face: it was white as the purest marble, and her soft, black ringlets hung around the pale features, still and motionless.

Next to my husband and my child, Emily had been the dearest treasure of my heart—my childhood's friend, the adviser of my youth, and the faithful, tried companion and

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sister of many a day of sorrow. And now she was gone. I had seen her at Rockenthwaite fifteen months before, and, at that time, there had seemed to me to belong to her something of a holy calmness, not of this world. Even now her deadly white brow was stamped by a heavenly serenity, and a light which appertains not to the children of time.

I did not see the bereaved husband till the evening of that long, sad day, and then he sent for me. I found him in Emily's dressing-room, adjoining the chamber which contained her mortal remains. On Arthur hours had done the work of years. Emily had been his idol, and he was prostrated by the blow which removed her from him. He had watched by her from the first moment in which danger had been announced till life departed. She had been, at last, he said, too weak for utterance, but she knew that she was dying, and very sweetly she sought to comfort him. She asked for me, and spoke with the deepest affection, and saw all her children, before falling into a kind of stupor which preceded death. Arthur had sat by

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her many hours, watching, with trembling anxiety, that strange, fearful sleep—when, at length, she seemed to awake. It was clear, however, that she recognised no one present. There was a slight flush, and a tremor, then a bright, angelic smile, and Emily Morton had joined that great multitude of the redeemed, which no man can number.

I remained with Arthur for nearly three weeks; and before I left him, his grief, though very deep and bitter, was the submissive grief of a Christian. He saw his precious Emily laid in the grave; and though the suffering of that hour seemed almost more than his mortal frame could bear, he was, nevertheless, enabled to say from his heart, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

And now I longed to return to Rockenthwaite; I had never before been separated from Grace, even for a single day, and the weeks seemed years till I should find myself once more in my cottage, with my daughter by my side, making all things bright by her

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presence. I arranged with Arthur that little Helen and Laura should visit me during the following summer, and then I left the poor mourner to his desolated home, knowing that the God in whom he trusted, and whom he served, would fill the void in his heart with holier and higher hopes than the best of earthly blessings can afford.

I determined that before I returned to Westmoreland, I would once more visit Abergwych. Twelve years had passed since last I had stood and gazed on its ancient turrets, and now, on a soft, calm, autumnal day, at noontide, I again entered the spacious park. I roamed alone and unnoticed, where I had once reigned a beloved and almost idolised mistress. I could not go into the house, for the family were at home, but I entered a small wood, where I had been accustomed to walk, at that season of the year, with Emily and my children, and whence, from an eminence, I could see the gray turrets of the lordly mansion which I had once called my own, the shining lake, and the beautiful gar-

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dens, which had once been my pride and delight.

Then arose sweet remembrances of the buried past. Herbert, as he was in our early wedded days,—my fair baby, Rosamond, —the lovely Laura,—and Emily, then so sad, and yet so calm and gentle, my well-tried and faithful friend! Once again, all these seemed to people that sweet spot as of yore; and scenes and conversations, long since forgotten, returned again with astonishing distinctness. I wept freely, but quietly. That lonely wood seemed a sacred place; for *their* feet had often paced its leaf strewn turf—*they* had often watched there, with me, the rich hues of the changing foliage—*they* who now had passed from time to eternity, who were gone to the land

> "Where everlasting spring abides,
> And never withering flowers."

They who had mingled their sorrows on earth were now mingling their glorious anthems on high. A blessed company they were in that bright, better land. My unknown father, my gentle young mother,

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my dear Aunt Selwyn, my two sweet babes, my beloved husband, and lastly, my dearest friend, were all there; and of all I could say—

> "They are gone into a land of light,
> And I alone sit lingering here!
> Their memory is fair and bright,
> And my sad thoughts doth cheer."

And I felt, as another poet has said, that

> "'Tis sweet, as year by year we lose
> Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
> How grows in Paradise our store."

But now my thoughts turned to my living treasure—to my darling Grace; and I hastened to leave, in all probability for ever, the fair domains of Abergwych Hall. I looked forward to many sweet tranquil years, spent in the society of my daughter and her noble husband; I pictured her a happy cherished wife and mother, as I myself had been, yet untouched by the *errors* which had clouded my existence. Vain dreams were these! but they were very lovely, and they filled my mind as I drove slowly away from the hills and valleys of North Wales.

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On the following evening the solemn mountains and the wild luxuriant vales of my beloved Westmoreland once more met my view, and by nightfall I had clasped Grace again in my arms, and was sitting in our quiet little apartment by her side.

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CHAPTER XIX.

"We see but dimly through the mists and vapours
Amidst these earthly damps;
What seem to us but sad funereal tapers,
May be heaven's distant lamps.
There is no death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but the suburb of the life Elysian,
Whose portals we call Death!"

LONGFELLOW.

FOR a few days after my return all was calm as the soft autumnal beauty which had not yet departed from the northern counties; Lady Jane was constantly with us, and letters arrived from Germany.

At length I remarked that Grace did not seem well. She looked radiant and bright as ever, but she complained that her sleep was disturbed, and her appetite fastidious. Very little was sufficient to alarm me, for I had always feared lest my daughter, who inherited her Aunt Laura's marvellous beauty, should

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also become a prey to the same fatal disease which seemed to be the scourge of the Travers family. Weeks, however, passed on; and though I watched my darling child with a doting mother's eye, nothing appeared to excite further anxiety.

We spent our Christmas at the Castle. Grace had learned to love the Earl, not only because he was Philip's father, but because he had himself awakened affection in her young heart. He called her his little daughter, consulted her taste in the arrangement of the gardens and shrubberies, and frequently asked her if she were not meditating great reforms, to be effected so soon as she should be Lady Trefusis.

But the very early spring, or rather the close of the winter, called forth a thousand fears. Day by day I watched that exceeding beauty, growing yet more perfect. There was a wildness and hilarity of spirit, too, which was totally foreign to Grace's nature; and I could not but think of Laura, who, thirteen years before, had visited me at Abergwych, with the same unearthly light in her shining eyes, the same exquisite

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complexion, and, above all, the same strange exuberance of mirth. Grace, herself, would not hear of having medical advice. She certainly was not well, she told me, but doubtless it was only the remains of a neglected cold.

So *she* said; but it was in vain that I endeavoured to recall anything like a cold; and if there had been one, however slight, it would not have been neglected. At last I spoke to Lady Jane, and she, too, was uneasy; and, finally, we determined to consult the same physician, who had (alas! too late) prescribed for Grace's father. We did not wish to alarm Grace, and it was settled that Lady Jane, who had been suffering the whole winter from some internal complaint, should send for him on her own account, and that my daughter should be at the Castle during his visit.

Our old friend, the physician from Carlisle, arrived, and he observed Grace minutely. Alas! he confirmed our worst suspicions. No time was to be lost, he said; a northern spring was more trying than the winter, and therefore we must immediately remove her

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to the southern coast of Devonshire, and remain there till the Westmoreland summer should have fairly set in. His injunctions were instantly obeyed, and we set out in a few days for Torquay, accompanied by Lady Jane. For some weeks the soft balmy atmosphere of the south seemed to restore our beloved invalid; but as the spring advanced she complained of the air as being too relaxing; and by the advice of a medical man whom we consulted on the spot, we left Torquay for a more northern situation. It occurred to me once more to visit the scene of my school-days; so we selected Brindsley as our temporary residence, and there Grace certainly revived, for the scenery being wilder, and the air fresher, it bore some similarity to her beloved Westmoreland. But she literally pined for mountains. One morning, when we were taking a romantic drive through rocky valleys and by crystal streams, she gazed for some time on the glorious landscape, all bright with the spring sunshine, and I asked her if it were not most lovely.

"Yes," she replied, somewhat sadly, "but

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there are no mountains; these are merely hills."

I was reminded of the unfortunate Greek Islander, who, being called upon in his exile, in the soft luxuriant vale of Tempe, to admire the beauty of the scenery, replied, "Yes, all is fair, but the sea—where is the sea?"

We made inquiry after Mrs. Talbot and the Misses Effingham; they were all living, and still at Brindsley Court, though they had resigned the care of the school into other and younger hands. How they welcomed me, and my daughter, and my friend, I cannot describe; nor how the good old ladies wept over their beloved Emily Leicester, as they still called her; but we recalled many bygone scenes as we rambled over the old park, and the oak-wood, where in youth I had so often walked with dear Emily, and my other companions.

Miss Effingham, the eldest of the three sisters, was become very infirm, yet occasionally she ventured among the young people, and cheered them by her kind smiles and words. In the school-room an entirely new generation had sprung up; there was

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not even a teacher of the olden days remaining; but Grace, who had never before met with so large an assemblage of young ladies, was delighted to make their acquaintance; and she, as well as myself, passed many pleasant hours within the walls of the old Court.

Still, I watched her very closely; and towards the middle of May I saw, with inexpressible anguish, that the terrible disease was gaining ground. To my surprise I found that Grace herself was aware of it; and as the summer drew nigh my sweet child drooped more and more. There was now, too, on her brow a deep melancholy, which troubled me exceedingly; she ceased to visit the school-room at the Court, and Philip's letters, though always eagerly received, seemed to be a source of sadness.

One afternoon, during the last week in May, Grace and I were alone. She had been drawing, reading, practising, and netting by turns; and at last, overcome with languor, all were thrown aside. She lay on the sofa asleep, I hoped, but it was not so, for soon she said—

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"Mamma, do let us go back to Rockenthwaite."

I replied, "You are no better, dearest, shall we not wait till you are stronger?"

"That will never be," she said, with a deep sigh; "and if I must die so young, and with so much untasted happiness before me, let it be in my own dear home. Oh! mamma, I long to see those dark mountains again, and that distant blue bay; let us go back!"

I drew near to Grace. Her tears were falling fast; and I said to her, "And if you were to die, my darling, would death be very terrible?"

"No," she replied, smiling through her tears; "I am not afraid of death, but I cannot bear to think of leaving you and Philip; we should have been so very happy together; and who will comfort Philip when I am gone?"

"The same Hand, my child," I replied, "that will lead you peacefully through the dark valley, will support him in his hour of trial."

"This is very wrong of me, mamma," said Grace, after a short silence; "very sinful;

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I strive to overcome it, but my heart clings to the earth; the world seems so beautiful: you are so gentle and tender, and Philip's love is so dear to me! I cannot say, 'I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.' You must pray for me, mamma, that this rebellious feeling may be taken away. I dare not say, 'Thy will be done,' because I know it is God's will that I must die, and I would change that decree if I could."

In a fortnight from that day we were at Rockenthwaite; and on the evening of our return, as Grace and I sat by the window, watching the fading crimson on the dark giant hills, she said, "Now, I think, I am almost content to die."

"Is the world, then, less fair, dearest?" I asked.

"Oh, no!" she answered. "Here, in this lovely country of ours, it is fairer than ever; and this scene is rendered sacred by the memory of my father; by my childish years, and by the springing and growth of the deep affection of my youth. But God has shewn me, now, that all is well. There is a brighter

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world there! far above that clear, shining star, where I shall meet my dear father again, and Aunt Emily, and my little sister and brother. And you, too, mamma, and my dear Philip, all will come in time;" and a lovely smile lighted up her beautiful face as she spoke.

From day to day, my fading treasure grew weaker. She suffered little pain. The glorious lustre of those dark eyes, so soon, apparently, to be quenched in death, shone fuller than ever; and the sweet, bright smile still lingered on her perfectly formed lips. The Earl came to us almost daily, with flowers and fruit for his favourite; he *would not* believe that she was about to leave us; but he recalled Philip; and then Grace seemed quite happy.

"I shall see him again," she said to me, one day, "and then I shall not have an earthly wish unfulfilled."

That intense love of life so natural to a young, cherished, and beautiful being, had passed away; there had evidently been a severe struggle, which none but God and herself had witnessed; but the victory was

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gained. Gently and gradually, the sweet influences of her early years, and her deep and innocent love, had loosened their hold on her affectionate heart, till, at length, she seemed to behold them as lovely visions on which she might gaze but for a time. Very calmly she prepared for the final change. Unknown to me, she arranged all her own little affairs, and even wrote a long letter to Philip, to be given to him in case she should die before his arrival.

At length Philip came; I dreaded the first interview; but it passed, and appeared to have wrought no ill effect. Like his father, the fond lover could not believe that his treasure was departing from mortal sight. He tried to persuade himself that she had outgrown her strength, and that a few months would restore her. Then he pleaded for an immediate marriage, that he might take her to Italy, where he was certain she would revive. The Earl and Lady Jane urged the adoption of this plan; especially as she had seemed better and stronger since Philip's arrival. I was far more hopeless. It was the third time that

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I had watched the noiseless inroads of this peculiar species of decline; but even I at last was cheered.

July brought with it some glorious weather, and it seemed to give new life to the invalid. Each day renewed some failing energy; she could walk further, she could breathe without pain; and at last she could attend divine service on the Sunday. Now we were all deceived; and the plan of taking her to Italy seemed most desirable. The physician was again consulted, and he warmly agreed with us. He would not say that in Italy she would *certainly* recover; but he was of opinion that she would certainly die before the approaching winter set in, if she remained in England; and that there was every hope that beneath a brighter sky, and in a purer air, her health might return. Firmer and firmer grew her lately trembling footsteps. Once again, she returned to her music and her flowers; and she herself became convinced that her life would be *prolonged;* but the idea of complete restoration never occurred to her mind.

Now we began to prepare for our long

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journey. We were to set out in September, and all our hopes were strengthened day by day. It was desirable that the marriage should take place before our departure. We were to remain in Italy two years, and neither Grace nor Philip could bear the idea of being united in a foreign land. They both loved Rockenthwaite and its grey old church; and accordingly, within its venerable walls my darling child became the bride of Lord Trefusis. A fortnight was spent in England, and then we were on the eve of commencing our journey.

It was a sweet autumnal evening, and we were all standing on a high terrace near the Castle, watching the last glow of sunset on our beautiful lake-mountains; the following evening was to find us far away from them. A slight mist arose before we could return to the house—very slight indeed; none but a doting mother or a fond husband would have observed it at all; but I threw a shawl around Grace, and Philip led her to the Castle. She wished to linger, for the sun had scarcely disappeared, but we would not allow her to do so; indeed, our precaution

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soon showed itself to be necessary, for she began to cough after we were settled in the drawing-room. I did not much regard it; the cough was not violent; but Philip seemed uncomfortable, and, to please him, she consented to go to rest at an unusually early hour. She ran lightly upstairs, and I myself dismissed her maid, and officiated at her toilette. I left her apparently inclined to sleep, and returned to my friends.

We all retired sooner than was usual with us, and we were exchanging good-nights in the corridor, when it occurred to me that I would go and see if Grace were asleep. I entered her dressing-room, but was met by Philip, who rushed past me as pale as death, and commanded a servant instantly to take the fleetest horse in the stable, and fetch the doctor.

I stood spell-bound. For a moment I dared not enter her room. When I did, my worst fears were confirmed. Her husband had come upstairs several minutes before me. All was so still that he thought she slept, and he had stolen quietly to gaze upon her, when, to his inexpressible horror and agony,

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he found that she had ruptured a blood-vessel, and was lying in a deadly swoon.

The medical man arrived. He said the slight fit of coughing had caused the hemorrhage, and desired that further advice might be immediately summoned. From that hour our beloved Grace never more rose from her bed. After the lapse of several days she recovered her consciousness, and recognised her husband and myself; but she was unable to hold any conversation.

A week passed slowly away, while life and death seemed to be battling for the mastery; and at length—death conquered! The last enemy came like sleep. Grace seemed very drowsy. Philip and I kissed her, and arranged her pillow as we would have lulled a tired child; and he sat by her side, and held her hand; he could hear her faint irregular breathings; once there was an almost imperceptible, convulsive motion in the hand which feebly clasped his own, then all was still, and when he looked again at the pale, beautiful face, the snowy eyelids were closed in long, dreamless sleep; the spirit of his young bride had departed to be for ever

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with the Lord. He was a widower, and I, childless.

"Perfect peace" was written upon that colourless brow. Very gently had the ties of her tender young heart been riven. The lovely features lay in calm, serene repose; and a smile, such as sleeping infants wear when we would fain believe that they commune in dreamland with some bright, glorious angel—a smile of mingled awe, and joy, and wonder, lingered on my Grace's sweet gentle face. Full well I knew in whom my child had trusted; even in Jesus alone, and with Him she now rejoiced.

There were many who deplored the early death of the young Lady Trefusis; and many deeply sympathised with the youthful husband, thus bereaved of his treasure ere he had fully tasted the cup of wedded happiness. But time passed on, and we were left alone in our woe. Philip's grief was too deep for expression, either by words or tears. It was, however, a consolation to him to think that she had been, though for so short a time, his wife. He could remember her as his own, his very own, whom none but God could

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have taken from him; and he looked forward to an eternal re-union in a brighter world.

And now I will close this history of my life; of its *errors* and its trials. I do not think I can experience much more of sorrow. If any of my beloved friends, the Earl, Lady Jane, Philip, or Arthur Morton, should be called before me to the "better land," the pang will not be severe, for they are all the children of God, through Christ Jesus; and soon—it cannot be very long—we shall be there re-united.

Once, and only once, my heart rose in murmuring complaint. I was walking alone through the galleries and corridors of the Castle, and I recalled the bright pictures I had once drawn, of my residence there, with Grace and her noble husband, and, perhaps, many fair children enlivening with their laughter and their play the old walls of the venerable mansion; and, for a time, I felt an inexpressible yearning to see once more the long-cherished form of my darling child. But I saw the bereaved husband, in his desolate sorrow, sinking, apparently, under his first and bitter trial, and I reproached

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myself for the impatient feeling of grief. His loss was greater than mine; yet he bent beneath the stroke in humble resignation to the loving Hand that had dealt the blow.

I still reside in my cottage. Philip has recovered his health, but the expression of deep sadness has not passed from his countenance: I do not think it will pass from it for years. The Earl and Lady Jane are still my affectionate friends. Mr. Francis Ormiston is, like Philip, as a son to me. The reason of this I have discovered: he, too, once loved my gentle daughter, but owing to her early engagement, his attachment was never declared. Arthur Morton is still a widower, and, I doubt not, will remain so. His little girls come to see me every summer. They are growing up very much like their dear excellent mother. Helen, especially, frequently brings to my mind my own first friend, Emily Leicester. Sir Thomas and Lady Baynton spend very much of their time in Switzerland, where the parents of Louise are still living.

For myself, I am here—

"Living again through all my life's farewells."

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That fatal error of doctrine, which perverted from the truth my beloved husband, has now gained fearful ground. When it first led him astray, its baneful influence had not, I believe, passed the boundaries of Oxford. It was not till several years after my marriage, that English people generally began to be initiated into its dreamy, mystic, and anti-Protestant tenets. Now I see, oh! how clearly, that Ritualism is but a modification of Romanism; that it is, indeed and verily, Popery made easy; a primer, so to speak, an inductive grammar, designed to imbue the unwary with the spirit of the Romish faith; and that, very gradually, and almost imperceptibly. The Reformed Church of England is not the less pure and scriptural because foes from Rome, under the guise of Protestant pastors, have here and there polluted her blessed channels of living water. The source is the same as it ever was; and they who look straight to the fountain-head, will drink of the streams as they flow on in unsullied purity through the ordinances of that portion of Christ's Church.

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In this day religious controversy abounds; the times are pregnant with errors. The dreams of Tractarianism; the refinements of modern mysticism, and modern transcendental philosophy; the gross, grovelling, earth-born sensualism, that would deny the immortality of the soul, and make man like to the beasts that perish; Romanism, Transcendentalism, Deism, Pantheism, systems of all names and species, are challenging each other in the vast arena of the world; but amidst it all, like the polar star to the benighted traveller on a pathless moor, shines the Word of the living God. By *that* infallible test, let every doctrine, whether of England's Church or otherwise, be examined; and as it bears the scrutiny, so let it stand or fall.

Man's natural pride and self-sufficiency are at the root of nearly half, or perhaps, nearly all, his religious errors. He loves to *do* something for his salvation. False doctrines give him something *to do* for this end; and he eagerly adopts them, and leans on these reeds, till they snap, and pierce him through with many sorrows.

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For me, though little more than forty years of age, I feel that grief has done the work of time. I cannot expect much longer to remain here, I do not wish it; my difficulty now is to restrain impatience. I lately met with the following beautiful passage. Would that the works of the gifted writer were more imbued with the spirit of the religion of Christ!

"No friendly glance, no spring-breeze, shall pass over me unenjoyed, or *unacknowledged;* out of every flower will I suck a drop of honey, and out of every hour a drop of eternal life. And then, I know it truly, be my life long or short, bear it a joyful or a gloomy colour—

> "'The day will never endure so long
> But at length the evening cometh;'

the evening in which I may *go home!*"

Most intensely can I feel all this. I know that the shades of evening are gathering around me, and I shall, indeed, soon go home; *home* to my Father's house, where many mansions are prepared by Christ Himself for those who love Him; where all my beloved

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ones are gathered around the throne, all redeemed by faith in the same precious blood of the Lamb, whereby alone cometh eternal life.

If these pages fall into the hands of any readers, young and inexperienced, and untaught by the blessed Spirit, as I once was, and treading the verge of religious error, may such readers be led, by their perusal, to search for themselves the Holy Scripture, and to test by its quenchless lamp the truth of those tenets, which, by persuasion or other causes, they may be about to embrace. Then, not in vain shall I have recorded THE ERRORS OF MY EARLY LIFE.

THE END.

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